

Our mission is to **RECOGNISE** the original gifts of our young people, preparing them for **SERVICE** in the common good for the transformation of society and we aim for academic **EXCELLENCE** for all, for the sake of the dignity of the individual.

Together, through our words and actions, our work and play
We point towards Christ each and every day.

St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School



Animal-assisted Education (Dog) POLICY

This policy has been approved and adopted by the Governing Body in February 2025 and will be reviewed in February 2026.

Signed by Chair of Governors: _____

Date:

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Signed by Head teacher: Catherine Whatley

Date: 4/2/25

Date	Reason & Changes Made	By
28/1/25	New Policy Aligned with PAWS Therapy Dogs model policy	Catherine Whatley Headteacher

The welfare of our animals is central to what we do. We are advocates for our animals; this allows them to be the best therapy dogs possible.

The following safeguarding policy has been created to ensure the dogs wellbeing and physical health are always considered when working with them.

This policy is specific to Bailey (dog) working with Catherine Whatley, Sophie Pearson and Paris Blake (employees) at St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School (organisation/business).

- Visits must be mutually beneficial for the dog and the organisation/individual they are visiting. This will be monitored closely.
- Catherine Whatley, Sophie Pearson and Paris Blake will only use positive methods when training and supporting Bailey.
- Catherine Whatley, Sophie Pearson and Paris Blake have completed the PAWS dog behaviour/stress signal training allowing them to be aware of stress signals Bailey may exhibit.
- Catherine Whatley will withdraw their dog if they feel their dog, Bailey, is stressed. A stressed dog will not be able to support the children effectively.
- Bailey must be well exercised before he attends sessions/visits and have regular (non-negotiable) breaks if he are onsite for a full 4 hour period. The definition of a break is non-contact time away from all other humans and dogs. It can be quietly resting or going for a walk or sniff.
- Water must be available at all times.

Once Bailey is comfortable in his environment he may support the children off lead. This is to allow Bailey free choice so he can opt out of an interaction if he needs to. This supports his stress levels allowing him to regulate himself.

- Always be dog led. Asking them to sit, stay, come can be used but we actively encourage children to observe the Bailey's body language to see if he is enjoying the activity. Over working and or expecting too much from him can result in learnt helplessness behaviours or over aroused stressed behaviours.
- Visits to the school will last a maximum of 4 hours. If the maximum contract is in place several non-restrictive/ compulsory breaks and rest times must be included to allow Bailey to recuperate. Four hours does not mean 4 hours contact time with children.



Additional Policy

- A safe, quiet rest area must be provided where Bailey will not have to engage with humans. This area must be a safe space that no one other than the Bailey’s caretakers have access to. Bailey’s rest area is his crate, in the headteacher’s office, which is fully covered and enclosed.
- If Bailey is under the weather, ill or injured he should not work. Catherine Whatley knows the dog best and should advocate for his needs.
- Catherine Whatley, Sophie Pearson and Paris Blake will communicate, set boundaries and manage the expectations of the visit to ensure a mutually beneficial visit takes place. Taking into account how many people are engaging with Bailey, the environment and the activities he is taking part in.
- Catherine Whatley, Sophie Pearson and Paris Blake will seek guidance from PAWS trainers and/or our own positive dog trainer if we have any concerns for Bailey’s health/behaviour. If we work as a team we can support our PAWS dogs positively.

Compliance Checks

Check	Person Responsible	Frequency
Whole-school parent survey to gather information about the children’s allergies, comfort levels around dogs and phobias.	Catherine Whatley	This information will be held on a register which is updated annually and as new information is shared with the school – see risk assessment for more information.
Vet Health/for for Work Check	Catherine Whatley	Annual
Risk Assessment	Catherine Whatley	Annual
AAE (Dogs) Policy	Catherine Whatley	Annual
Dog Safety, Body Language & Hygiene Assembly	Sophie Pearson	Annual
Public Liability Insurance	Catherine Whatley	Annual
Health Insurance	Catherine Whatley	Annual
Review incident log	All handlers	After every incident and at least every term.
PAWS Registration and ongoing professional support	School	Annual

Referrals

1. The annual parent survey will identify children with low comfort levels around dogs or dog phobias. Parents will be asked to indicate if they



Additional Policy

- would like their child to work alongside Bailey to increase their child's comfort levels.
2. Each term, the headteacher and SENCO will discuss the vulnerable pupils' caseload and identify any child who may benefit socially or emotionally from working alongside Bailey.
 3. Parents of identified children will be asked to complete an online consent form before any group or 1:1 activities take place.
 4. Once consent has been received, identified pupils will be added to an activity log where sessions will be planned and evaluated.
 5. Before activities will take place with Bailey, identified pupils will be asked to sign a contract and will complete basic dog safety learning (i.e. My bubble, your bubble, be a tree)
 6. The pupils will work in groups or 1:1 to build a relationship with Bailey and be awarded five certificates.

Read this policy alongside the Dog in School Risk Assessment.