

14th March 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

Family Dogs on School Grounds

As a school we recognise that dogs are an important part of life for some of our families. We promote the relationship between people and their pets and encourage the idea of pets as ‘family members.’ We do see pet ownership as a valuable educational experience for children.

As you are aware, we have our own therapy dogs – as the value of pet ‘therapy’ is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding. Our therapy dogs have received specialist training, and we have specific insurance in place for them to be working with pupils at school. There are also detailed risk assessments in place for our therapy dogs, to control the risks associated with having them on site.

However, we are concerned regarding the increasing number of family dogs on the school site and the fact that, for example, we cannot control the health and safety risks that they may present to others, their behaviour and whether or not they are covered by appropriate insurance. Even well-behaved dogs can behave unpredictably when placed in an unfamiliar, busy, noisy and crowded school environment and that this can lead to unexpected behaviour in even the best-behaved pet. Children can also behave unpredictably when in the presence of dogs especially where they are not used to being with them.

We have therefore made the decision that with effect from **Monday 17th March 2025**, family dogs will not be allowed on the grounds of Five Acre Wood School at any time (unless they are used as an aid to visual impairment or disability). We also kindly request that dogs are not tied up and left unattended at the school gates.

Thank you for your support and understanding regarding this matter.

Kind regards



Tim Williams | Headteacher (Boughton Lane)