



## **Nursery Dog Risk Assessment**

### **Introduction:**

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. Having a Nursery dog is something that has been considered for a while, and since has been heavily researched into the risks, the benefits and the practicalities. After extensive research and consideration, we decided to go ahead and Millie was welcomed in February 2023.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

- For the Nursery to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.
- For the dog to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
- To have a pet that the children could interact with and also be of benefit to the children's social and emotional development as part of Poppins ethos of a homely setting and the curriculum we offer.
- To provide children with the opportunity of growing up with a dog, to enjoy the benefits of this, and alleviate any fears in children's early years where this will have the biggest impact in a child's development. Many of our families are working parents and may not have the opportunity to commit to such a pet at home, therefore we feel by offering this as an opportunity at Nursery will provide the children with the love and attention they can receive from a dog without the full time commitment.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. We will be sharing the risk assessment, policy and FAQ's with parents via email and Tapestry. Any parent who does not want their child to interact with Millie has the option to inform the Nursery and we will welcome feedback or concerns. There are no diseases associated with the puppy as Millies' vets will be responsible for vaccinations, including rabies and completing regular health checks and necessary treatment. Millie will also be fully insured.

### **Approach:**

Millie will not be fully integrated into the setting until she is at least 12 months old. She will not be able to be integrated into the free flow of the setting until she is 18 months old and had her full training. Millie has already visited Poppins without children present as a settling in session for her to get used to the smells and the environment. She will spend her first week getting to know the staff first, and then her second week introducing to the older children first (with parental consent) and only two children at a time with an additional member of staff. Once children have been introduced to Millie they are welcome to come upstairs to see Millie so the

environment is calm and controlled with high level of supervision. Millie will not ever be left unattended with children. Millie will not be left to roam around Nursery at any point. Millie will never be around children when they are eating and children must wash their hands after petting her.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by the Nursery Manager, Sue as the registered owner of the Nursery, and key staff.

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1 – 5*	Controls in Place	Review date and Signature
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to the ground.	1	The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the Nursery.	
	Child scratched by dog.	3	Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.  The dog will always be on a lead or carried	

	<p>Child bitten by dog.</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>when she is not in her crate, except when she is undergoing structured training with his primary trainer or an external trainer.</p> <p>The introduction of Millie to children will be very gradual and on a much higher ratio with close supervision. Children will be taught about safe approach / touch and the consequences of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, as a setting we will seek support from outside agencies such as Dogs Trust. We will talk to the children at circle time and read books about safely approaching dogs.</p> <p>Children will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them.</p> <p>The dog will undergo formal training in school / at the family home with an experienced ability dogtrainer.</p> <p>The dog will also undergo conditioning to the nursery environment without the children present, to allow for Millie to be accustomed to her surroundings.</p> <p>Risk of scratching and biting will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed as she progresses through his weekly training.</p> <p>All staff who are willing (following the staff survey) will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a Nursery dog.</p> <p>She will attend the vets regularly to ensure she</p>	
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			<p>is in good health and that her claws are kept short.</p> <p>She will not be fully integrated into the setting until she is 12 months old to get a better idea of her temperament. We have chosen a breed that is known to be good around children, and a breeder who has brought Millie up around small children.</p>	
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<p>The dog gets loose from her crate or lead.</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The dog's crate is big enough for her to be happy and safe during the school day and the children are taught not to tease him.</p> <p>The crate is in a quiet, calm room away from the bustle of Nursery day to day life and is alongside her trusted adult – her owner – during these periods.</p> <p>A stair gate has been fitted on the staff room door as well as an existing fire door at the bottom of the stairs.</p>	
<p>The dog causing allergies.</p>	<p>Children or staff have allergic reactions</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies before the introduction of the dog to the school. A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will kept on record and updated each year.</p> <p>The children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.</p>	
<p>Children getting germs from the dog.</p>	<p>Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Should the dog defecate on the Nursery site amember of staff will clear this up immediatlyand dispose of it in a safe way. He will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds thatchildren have limited access to. The area willbe disinfected as required.</p> <p>All immunizations are kept up to date in accordance with the European Pet Passport Scheme and a record will be kept of this.</p>	

			<p>Flea treatment is carried out at 6 week intervals.</p> <p>Even when Millie is fully integrated she will not be allowed downstairs when children are eating; and never in the food preparation area.</p>	
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep.	Nursery unable to afford the ongoing cost of Millie's day to day upkeep or medical bills.	1	<p>The dog is ultimately the responsibility of her owner – Sam McCann - both in a well-being and financial aspect.</p> <p>Millie will be insured by the her owner and food will be provided by Sam.</p> <p>Any training will be funded by Sam, this is a short-term cost which has long lasting benefits for Millie and the children.</p>	
Temperament of Dog	Over pulling on lead causing stress for staff. Biting.		<p>Millie will be completing a six week Kennel Club puppy course starting on 4<sup>th</sup> March. Here she will learn the following;</p> <p>All core obedience behaviours including sit, watch me, down, settle on a bed, stay, wait and stand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Important safety cues such as teaching puppy to 'leave' and 'drop' items</li> <li>* "Watch me" - Focus skills that teach your puppy that looking at you 'pays' really well</li> <li>* Lead Walking</li> <li>* Recall games</li> <li>* Whistle Training</li> <li>* Manners around food and taking food gently.</li> <li>* Happy handling - Building life skills needed for stress free vet visits with handling and grooming tips</li> <li>* Making hands mean 'great things are going to happen'</li> <li>* Jumping up</li> </ul>	
Claim is made against Nursery about the dog.	School not adequately covered financially.	1	<p>Insurance (both school and personal) will cover any claim.</p> <p>Certificate will be kept in office and renewed annually.</p>	