



SCHOOL DOG POLICY 2026

Adopted by the Governing Body, September 2026

Review date, September 2027

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1. School Policy

Research has shown many benefits to therapy and reading dogs in school settings. Pupils can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In particular, it is intended to have a positive impact upon literacy skills, pupil wellbeing, and behaviour. In its simplest form pupils of all ages can take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog, positively impacting upon school life.

While having a dog in school is beneficial for pupils, it needs to be equally enjoyable for the dog. The needs and welfare of the dog is integral to this policy. The school dog (Dewi) is a red Cavapoo (King Charles Cavalier/ Poodle cross which is known for being intelligent and respond well to training). Dewi was picked for his calm temperament. He is well behaved with children, very sociable and does not shed hair.

This policy is designed to safeguard Dewi and YPDVA pupils. This will be annually and updated if there are any changes.

The dog is owned by Mrs Lucinda Rees for the purpose of providing burns therapy and reading dog provision within the school.

All pupils, staff parents and visitor are required to abide by this policy, which will be published on the school website.

The Headteacher, Mr Siôn Mason-Evans, Mr James White, Deputy Chief Education Offer, and the Venerable Paul Mackness, Chair of Governors have agreed to a school dog (Dewi) working within the school in accordance with this policy.

2. Risk Assessment

In common with other hazards, the risk of a school dog present on site needs to be managed through a comprehensive risk assessment. This risk assessment will be updated at least annually.

3. School Procedures

- The school dog is the only dog permitted in the school site at any time. This is to safeguard all pupils, staff and the school dog. Assistance, therapy and working dogs are allowed on school premises with agreement from the Head teacher.
- Staff, visitors and pupils known to have allergic reactions to dogs will not be permitted to interact with Dewi (see risk assessment).
- While on school site, Dewi will have a bed and dedicated supervised location for rest periods as follows:

Dewi campus: Office Manager's office

Non campus: Staff Room or Office

Aidan campus: Office

These areas must enable Dewi to rest undisturbed and always be free to move away from child or situation if he chooses to. There must also be easy access to a water bowl and toys to help Dewi feel relaxed.

- If Dewi is ill he will not be allowed into school. Mrs Rees will organise alternative care.
- There may be other times when it is appropriate for Dewi to remain at home during the school day, for example because he is tired. This is at the discretion of Mrs Rees.

- Dewi will receive regular vet checks and his immunisations will be kept up to date by Mrs Rees. The costs of veterinary treatment and insurance are met by the school charitable/ activities account and the Cyfeillion.
- Dewi will always be under control and the supervision of an adult within the school premises.
- Pupils must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- There must be a designated area on each site away from pupils where Dewi can exercise and go to the toilet.
- Dewi will be based on one site on the allocated day and will only be transported by the responsible person for the day. All legal requirements for transportation of dogs will be adhered to including the fitting of a harness within a car.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by the dog handler only.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog via the school visitor information page.
- In the case of a fire evacuation or other emergency Dewi will remain under the supervision of the responsible adult during evacuation.
- If there are any issues raised regarding Dewi and interaction with pupils, this information should be passed to the Head teacher or a member of SIT immediately.
- Dewi has been assessed and trained by Burns by your Side and is a certified Burns Reading Dog.
- The curriculum will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around the school dog. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.
- YPDVA staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog to better inform research into the benefits of a school therapy/ reading dog.
- These procedures and code of conduct are non-negotiable for the dog's wellbeing.
- These procedures will be under constant review and will be amended as required in line with the dog and the pupil's wellbeing
- Pupils whose parents have withdrawn consent will not be allowed to interact with Dewi or attend dog therapy sessions.
- Dewi's attendance in a classroom will be pre-arranged in order that pupils can be reminded of the following codes of conduct.
- If Dewi wishes to leave the classroom he should be allowed to.

4. Codes of Conduct

- Pupils should be careful to stroke Dewi on his body, chest, back and not by his face, ears, or on top of his head. They can do this if he is near them, but they are not to leave their seats.
- Pupils are not allowed to eat while in the presence of Dewi.
- Nothing is to be put on the floor.
- Noise levels are to be kept low.
- Pupils must always wash their hands after handling/ stroking Dewi.
- Pupils understand that any deliberate threatening behaviour towards Dewi will result in exclusion.
- In any interaction pupils should be reminded of appropriate behaviour around the dog ie. not make sudden movements, do not put their face near the dog, always approach standing up, never disturb when Dewi is sleeping or eating.
- Everyone must wait for Dewi to be sitting or lying down before touching or stroking him.



YSGOL
PENRHYN
DEWI

Dewi



Staff