



BALLYORAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dogs on School Premises Policy

Reviewed March 2025

Legislation

The primary applicable legislation is the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and where risk assessment is required, the Management of Health and Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000. In respect of the dog(s), it is the Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 and as amended.

General Policy

Our school vision states 'As an Inclusive School we aim to provide a happy, caring, **safe** and stimulating learning environment...' For the Health and Safety of the entire school community, parents, pupils and staff are not permitted to bring dogs into the school grounds.

Exception

The only exception to this policy are Guide Dogs or Dogs used for other educational/mental health purposes.

- Dogs from outside organisations eg Guide Dogs for the Blind, as well as animal rescue charities such as the Dogs Trust will be permitted to come into school.
- Dogs from outside organisations eg Mental Health/Therapy Dogs will be permitted to come into school.

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with dogs.

Bringing dogs into school

Suitable arrangements will be put in place prior to any dog being brought into the school to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of the entire school community. These arrangements will include:

- Agreement will be sought from the school principal and parents will be notified of the intention to bring a dog into the school in advance.
- A Risk Assessment will be carried out prior to the visit of any dog into school.
- Allergic reactions cannot be discounted from handling dogs, or just from being near them. Children known to have allergic reactions to dogs will have their access restricted.
- Consideration will be given to the temperament and characteristics of the breed of dog being brought in, including the size of the dog and its age.
- A puppy will not have its adult teeth and will be unlikely to cause the same degree of damage as an adult dog. Thought will also be given to the environment that the animal has been brought up in. Dogs and puppies which have been brought up in a family home environment should be well used to the behaviour and sounds of children.
- Dogs that are ill will not be brought into schools.
- Dogs with young puppies (those under the age of 8 weeks) will not be brought into school as there is the risk of the mother becoming overprotective, which may cause her to react out of character.

- Dogs will be kept on a lead at all times and under the full control and supervision of their owner.
- Children will never be left alone with dogs and there will be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Prior to the visit, pupils will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around dogs. Children are likely to become excited and it is important that they react calmly and carefully around the dog(s).
 - ✓ They will be told not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog.
 - ✓ Children will be told not to put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up.
 - ✓ Children will be told never to go near or disturb a dog that is sleeping or eating.
 - ✓ Children will not be allowed to play too roughly with the dog.
 - ✓ The number of children who would be patting/stroking or meeting the dog will be considered. A large number of children could cause the dog to become nervous and agitated. On-going monitoring of the situation is vital. Since dogs cannot speak, the only way they can be understood is through their body language. Growling or baring of teeth indicate that the dog is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. Dogs displaying any of these warning signs will be immediately removed from the environment.
 - ✓ Children will not feed or eat close to the dogs.
 - ✓ Children will always wash their hands after handling a dog.

Stray dogs on school property

- Stray dogs on the school premises must be reported to the office immediately and someone will then go out and assess the situation.
- If there is a stray dog in the school grounds, we will contact the local Council Dog Warden who will come and remove the dog from your school.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Board of Governors are responsible for ensuring that the school has a written policy for dogs in School.
- The Principal is responsible for developing this guidance into a school policy and implementing it.
- Staff, pupils and parents are required to abide by this policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years or when new guidance is published.