



Brickhouse Primary School Nurture Dog Risk Assessment

The value of having an animal in school is becoming widely recognised as having a positive impact on people's well-being. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can lower rates of anxiety creating calmer states of mind. This applies to staff as well as to children. 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.

School has a Shih Tzu, called Molly-Mae, and they are known for their love of all people and a breed that has a coat which creates very little dander to the extent that it is described as hypo-allergenic. Molly-Mae is in school four days per week and children have session time with Molly-Mae as detailed in the school's Nurture Dog Policy. Molly-Mae is classed as a working dog in school, and will be treated as such by all stakeholder, just as any other working dog would be i.e. a Guide Dog. She is a working dog from 8.00am in the morning until 5.30pm when she leaves.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be reviewed at least annually, or more regularly where appropriate, or if there has been a significant change.

The review will be carried out by the Headteacher and the Site Manager in conjunction with the Safeguarding, Welfare and Pastoral Officer. The risk assessment will be submitted to the Governing Board following review.

Nurture Dog Risk Assessment

Applicable to: The Whole School			Specify: Nurture Dog: Molly-Mae		
Assessment Date: September 2025		Lead Assessors: PN/AW		Persons consulted: Paul Newby, Adam Whitehouse, Carla Newby	
Review Date: April 2026		Further Action Required? (circle)	Yes		

Process/ Activity	Hazards Identified	Persons at Significant Risk	Existing Controls	Are existing controls adequate? Y/N	What additional controls are required?
Control	Dog over excited inplay or jumping up or straining towards anyone	Children, Staff & Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School has identified handlers, who are appropriately trained to handle Molly- Mae Lead Handler – Carla Newby Secondary Handlers – Paul Newby and Adam Whitehouse The Lead Handler’s role is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide training research appropriate training for herself and other handlers provide advice advocate for Molly-Mae ensure all needs are meet by all other handlers set Molly-Mae’s timetable oversee the Nurture Garden as a space of Molly-Mae ensure all relevant paperwork in relation to health and safety is up-to-date, in conjunction with the Site Manager ensure all stakeholders in school understand Molly-Mae’s purpose and worth All secondary handlers must follow lead handler’s instructions and advice at all times. 	Yes	NA

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Handler to ensure her training and the training of secondary handlers is updated and maintained on at least a termly basis. • The Lead Handler must provide training for all members of staff on at least an annual basis • The Lead Handler must provide regular support to children on how to work with an approach Molly-Mae in school • The Lead Handler must produce a non-negotiable sheet for all staff to use, when dealing with Molly-Mae • All handlers must meet Molly-Mae's needs at all times and manage her risk to all other stakeholders when in her care to ensure she always remains under full control • Any handler who is not able to manage Molly-Mae due to illness e.t.c. must not be in control of her that day or until they are better • Molly-Mae must be maintained at least a 1m distance from children • Molly-Mae must wear her harness and lead appropriate to the handler, at all times, when out of the well-being hub, particularly on entry and exit from the building • Molly-Mae must not be put in any chaotic or stressful situations • Stakeholders must not enter the Well-Being Hub without permission • If Molly-Mae is in a SEND session and handler must be present 		
Hygiene	Dog mess in on school site	Children, Staff & Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dog cleaning kit will also be available in the room the dog is working in, in case of accidents. • Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately, with the affected area appropriately disinfected. • All dog waste will be subject to hazardous waste disposal, i.e. waste double bagged in yellow biohazard waste bag and then place directly into the 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog-poo and bio-hazard bagsto be in constant supply.

			<p>outside bins.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be the responsibility of the dog handler at the time to clean up and dispose of any dog waste. • Handler to inform the Site Manager so that the carpet can be cleaned using the carpet cleaner 		
Hygiene	Parasites	Children, Staff & Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molly-Mae will be vaccinated, wormed and flea protected in accordance with the vet's recommendation. • Flea treatment will be administered monthly. Molly-Mae will be checked over regularly for parasites. • She will be kept clean and well-groomed by her lead handler to ensure a healthy coat and good dental hygiene. Molly-Mae's bedding will be regularly washed and her toys regularly disinfected, cleaned and dried. 	Yes	N/A
Hygiene	Contact with dog sick	Children, Staff & Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Molly is unwell, she will NOT be in school. • If she is sick in school, the sick will be cleared up with and appropriate bodily fluid kit as per school policy 	Yes	N/A

Allergy/ asthmatic reaction	Allergic reaction	Children, Staff & Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molly has a coat that produces very little dander which reduces the risk of allergic reaction. • All parents will be notified about the school dog and given the opportunity to advise the school of their child's allergies to or known fear of dogs. • A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will be kept on the school SIMs system medical records and her handlers must be informed must be notified. • Children/staff with allergies will be able to opt out of situations of interaction with the dog. • Dog bedding regularly washed. • Molly will not be allowed in rooms where staff/children have allergies. • Good hygiene routines and hand washing to be followed by all who come in contact with the dog see above. • Molly-Mae attends school usually on a Tuesday to Friday. When she is in in school she is registered on InVentry • Signs on door for days when Molly-Mae is in residence. 	Yes	N/A
Dog phobia	Anxiety caused by close proximity to dog- including those with religious beliefs that do not allow contact with dogs	Children, Staff & Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental consent form to be issued for children to have close contact with the dog where this is agreed. • Visitors advised and Molly-Mae removed if necessary to a suitable alternative room. • If an issue is pre-determined, she will not come into school that day. 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there is an identified phobia/anxiety the dog is not banned from coming to school but every effort is made to segregate the dog from the people with phobias/ anxiety. • School Office to advise all visitors that she is on site.

Scratched	Dog over excited in play or jumping up.	Children, Staff & Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molly-Mae will be accompanied in public spaces by a handler and on an appropriate lead to for the handler and harness. • She will never be allowed to roam around the school. • Molly-Mae will attend refresher training as appropriate. • Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog. • Staff and children will be taught how to approach the dog safely. • Children will not be allowed to pat or stroke Molly-Mae. • Children and staff will be instructed not to feed Molly-Mae. • Handlers will have Molly-Mae's specific treats that will be used as appropriate in the day. • Children to be taught the rules of safe animal interaction. • Rules to be reinforced by all staff. • Molly-Mae's claws will be kept trimmed. • Molly-Mae will be kept on an appropriate lead to for the handler and harness whilst walking around the school grounds. • All incidents will be reviewed, reported, investigated and passed on to the Governor responsible for the Nurture Dog 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molly-Mae will be supervised at all times she is in contact with children and staff • Handler to be sensitive and vigilant to the children's and dog's responses around each other. • When outside during morning drop off and afternoon collect, the handler will ensure she stands away from the busy traffic so Molly-Mae does not experience children running towards her which could cause her to jump or bark. • This will usually be between two parked cars. • She will also display a sign warning parents about children approaching Molly-Mae and reminding them she is a working dog.
Dog bite	Dog bites someone	Children, Staff & Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handlers are trained in working with children and are familiar with Molly-Mae. • Children are warned of the hazards of animals, e.g. not tormenting the dog, not approaching a sleeping dog, recognising signs Molly-Mae is not happy. • Children taught how to approach Molly-Mae safely. Children to be taught the rules of safe animal interaction. Rules to be reinforced by all staff. • Handlers to regularly monitor the dog's 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molly-Mae will be supervised at all times she is in contact with children and staff • Handler to be sensitive and vigilant to the children's and dog's responses around each other.

			<p>temperament, behaviour and mood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handlers to supervise Molly-Mae at all times and ensure she kept on an appropriate lead to for the handler and harness when moving around the school. • Handler or member of staff to say 'no' firmly, if mouth contact looks likely or if a change in mood is detected in Molly-Mae • Molly-Mae to be returned to the Well-Being Hub, if any mouth contact looks likely. • All incidents will be reviewed, reported, investigated and passed on to the Governor responsible for the Nurture Dog 		
Financial cost	Claim is made against the school about the dog.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molly- Mae has third party liability insurance through membership of the Dog's Trust and pet insurance for accident and injury to herself. 	Yes	N/A
Animal Welfare	Negative behaviour caused by stress, bites or scratches	The dog, staff and children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Molly-Mae has time away from the children in her dog bed undisturbed. The bed is the right size for her to be happy and safe. • Ensure she has time in a quiet space without any children. Ensure she only interacts with the children in short bursts and is not crowded by children or adults • The Well-Being Hub is Molly-Mae's safe space • Ensure she is not in school full time (four days per week) • Ensure she does not come to school in very hot weather, as her welfare is paramount and becoming overheated risks a change in docile temperament. • Ensure she has regular breaks as per Nurture Dog Policy • Ensure she has appropriate food and water throughout the day • Molly-Mae has a cool pad to lie on to prevent overheating • Molly-Mae to be off her lead in the Well-Being Hub and no children will be present at this time. 	Yes	N/A

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molly-Mae's toys to be adequately spaced and sorted throughout the day to prevent tripping hazards. • Molly-Mae to be able to run free in the school's nurture garden, when children are not present. • Molly-Mae to have a specialised toileting area in the nurture garden and will be trained to use this area. This area will not be accessible to the children. • Any faeces will be cleared before children enter the garden, and disposed of as described above. • Toileting area to be regularly washed down. • Handlers to ensure Molly-Mae is appropriately stimulated through-out the day • A sign and a safe space blanket must accompany Molly-Mae to any classroom 		
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