

Dogs in Academies Policy

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20/03/2023	1.0	1st Draft
08/07/24	1.1	1st issue
02/10/2024	1.2	The Dog Mentor added to further reading

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1.0 Scope

This document sets out the policy and process for managing dogs across all LAT academies.

2.0 Background

The Trust and its academies need to ensure that it provides an environment conducive to learning.

Dogs have been known to provide emotional and social benefits to students, especially those with special needs or mental health issues. Therefore, the following policy has been established to ensure the safety and well-being of students, staff and dogs in academies across LAT .

3.0 Policy

Permission: Therapy dogs are permitted in academies only with the permission of the Academies Director. Non therapy dogs are not permitted in academies or on their grounds.

Training and Certification: Dogs that are permitted in academies must be certified as therapy dogs and must have completed a specialised training programme. The certification must be provided by a recognised organisation, and the training programme must be approved by the academy's Principal.

Health and Vaccinations: The therapy dogs must have up-to-date health records, including vaccinations, and must be free of any infectious diseases.

Handler: The therapy dog must have a designated handler who is responsible for its care and supervision at all times. The handler must be a trained professional who has experience in working with dogs in an academy setting.

Risk Assessment: A full and detailed risk assessment shall be undertaken and measures put in place to reduce risk regarding the purpose which the dog is being used.

Purpose: Therapy dogs are only permitted in academies for specific purposes, such as providing emotional support to students with special needs or mental health issues. They are not permitted to be **used for any other purposes.**

Supervision: The therapy dog and its handler must be under the constant supervision of the academy's staff during their visit. The handler must ensure that the dog is on a leash or tethered at all times.

Identification: The therapy dog must wear identification tags, indicating its certification and vaccination status.

Consent: Staff, and parents must provide their consent before the therapy dog is permitted to interact with them.

Limitations: The therapy dog's visit to the academy must be limited to a specific time and purpose. It must not interfere with the academy's regular activities or pose any risk to the students or staff.

Dog Behaviours: Should a dog's behaviour or general demeanour negatively change in its attitude towards pupils or staff for any reason, it is at the behest of the Principal, or Academies Director if necessary to immediately cancel the dog attending the academy.

Liability & Insurance : The academy is not liable for any injuries or damages caused by the therapy dog. The dog's handler and its owner are solely responsible for any such incidents. It is required that the dog's owner takes out appropriate insurance cover and provides evidence of this to the academy. The insurance should provide public liability cover up to a value of £5m as a minimum. If the dog is being used to provide training or a service at an academy, some insurers will likely no longer treat the dog as a 'pet' and they wouldn't then be suitably covered by some policies. We recommend talking to different insurance providers to find the most suitable policy.

For dogs that are invited into Academies for booked sessions the Principal has the duty to ensure insurances are in place.

For dogs which have a more permanent presence on site the Principal will appoint a member of academy staff to be responsible and name them on the appropriate Curriculum compliance task and ensure insurances are uploaded and up to date.

Conclusion:

The policy outlined above is designed to ensure the safe and responsible use of therapy dogs in LAT academies . It is important to note that this policy may be subject to change, based on new research or circumstances that may arise.

Further reading;

[The Dog Mentor](#)

[The Dogs Trust](#)

[K Leaders - Dogs in school: guidance and risk assessments](#) login required

[The Kennel Club Bark and Read](#)