



Wellbeing Dog Policy

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Description: This policy outlines the School's approach to using wellbeing dogs in School.

OUR SCHOOL AIMS

- ❖ *To be a safe and trusted foundation for our pupils to achieve their individual academic, social and creative potential.*
- ❖ *To cultivate the skills, knowledge, self-awareness and academic credentials our pupils will need to confidently meet the challenges of our rapidly changing world.*
- ❖ *To instil and nurture a strong sense of social responsibility, integrity and environmental awareness so our pupils positively contribute to a sustainable and just society.*
- ❖ *To guide each pupil in the discovery, delight and development of their individual gifts, talents and character.*
- ❖ *To create and sustain an inclusive and contemporary school culture, where diversity, difference and individuality are recognised and celebrated.*
- ❖ *To prioritise physical and emotional wellbeing across every facet of our school community.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 There is an increasing body of research regarding the benefits to a school of having a wellbeing dog. Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. Children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.
- 1.2 This policy has taken due regard of statutory legislation and animal wellbeing guidance:
- The Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974;
 - The Animal Welfare Act 2006;
 - RSPCA Policies on Animal Welfare (revised 2014);
 - School Therapy Dog Association standards.
- 1.3 The School has 2 wellbeing dogs - Luna in the senior school and Rosco in the Prep School. The Head of External Relations, Caroline Bool, is the owner of Luna and Luna lives with Mrs Bool and her family. Rosco is owned by the Director of Studies, Christina Hubbard, and Rosco lives with Mrs Hubbard and her family.



2.0 PURPOSE AND CURRICULUM

2.1 The purpose for having a wellbeing dog in the School includes the following:

- dogs teach children responsibility. Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give children a sense of importance and satisfaction that they can't get from school or other chores. The relationship that develops can be life-changing for a child and a great support system as they themselves continue to grow and develop.
- dogs can teach children patience. Dogs do not always do as they are told first time.
- dogs can teach children compassion. Just like humans dogs feel emotion and pain. They are prone to injuries and the infirmities of age during their relatively short lives.
- dogs can teach children about socialisation. Dogs are social animals that enjoy and need attention and affection. By learning how to interact with a dog, children can learn how to better socialise with other children. If they can learn the social cues of a dog, then interacting with humans who can talk will be easier.
- dogs are fun. They greet you with a wagging tail every day and can cheer you up even on your worst day. With the proper training and supervision, a dog can enrich a child's life.

2.2 Luna and Rosco are used to help the pupils in the following ways:

- improving concentration, attention and listening;
- play, participation and social interaction;
- speech and other communication;
- reducing anxiety;
- sensory skills development;
- motor skills development;
- cognitive skills development;
- confidence and self-esteem;
- responsibility and respect for others;
- developing independence;
- motivation to attend school or engage in specific learning/activities;
- specific life skills e.g. road safety;
- improving the effectiveness of wellbeing sessions.



3.0 WELLBEING DOG TRAINING AND BEHAVIOUR STANDARDS

- 3.1 Luna and Rosco have been chosen because of their intelligence that means they will respond well to training and are known to be good with pupils, they both shed little hair and are very sociable and friendly.
- 3.2 Luna and Rosco and their handlers have been trained by the Dog Mentor. Luna is currently at Gold level.
- 3.3 A total of 6 members of staff have been trained with Luna, and an initial 2 members of staff with Rosco
- 3.4 Luna and Rosco are expected to be:
- able to tolerate physical interaction with pupils.
 - discouraged from jumping up, and discouraged from licking.
 - not display any evidence of guarding toys or food.
 - unfazed by medical equipment like wheelchairs or crutches
 - able to walk around the corridors on a loose short lead at all times.
 - able to display the “stay” position and remain so for 2 minutes.
 - able to pass through a door way in a controlled manner.
 - able to come away from distraction and return to handler.
 - able to “leave,” an item on request from handler.

4.0 SCHOOL ORGANISATION FOR THE USE OF A WELLBEING DOG

- 4.1 This Policy outlines the School’s approach to using a wellbeing dog in School. A full risk assessment has been developed. Both will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 4.2 Luna and Rosco are insured through the School, under working dog insurance.
- 4.3 For safety Luna and Rosco and their handlers are trained for wellbeing work (see section 3 above), there will be a phased introduction, close monitoring whilst working, close supervision with Luna and Rosco always on a lead when moving around the School. No other dogs are allowed on site.
- 4.4 Luna and Rosco are fully vaccinated, and treated for fleas and worms as necessary. Luna and Rosco are under veterinary care as required, and have been microchipped.
- 4.5 The areas that Luna and Rosco will visit, or be in, are clearly labelled so that staff, pupils and visitors are aware that a dog may be inside.
- 4.6 Staff, visitors and pupils known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near either dog. It may be necessary for the staff, pupil or visitor concerned not to enter the rooms where the dog will be, limit the areas the dog is allowed to visit and/or enhance the cleaning of the rooms the dog uses.
- 4.7 For any member of staff, students or visitors who have a fear of dogs their contact with Luna and Rosco will be limited. Luna and Rosco will be on a lead and under the control of a trained handler at all times. Walks on the periphery of the school sites have been designated as walk routes for the dogs and their handlers.
- 4.8 A quiet base for Luna and Rosco have been established in the Head of External Relations /Director of Studies offices with a comfortable dog bed. The offices are quiet, away from the pupils and do not have many disturbances.
- 4.9 Suitable toileting places for Luna and Rosco have been identified that are away from where the pupils meet up and learn. The handler of the dog is available to take the dog to the toilet as and when



required. The handler will not have sole responsibility of the pupils at that time and will clear up after Luna/Rosco if necessary. Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.

- 4.10 A canine first aid kit is kept on the School sites, and the handlers will be briefed in its use.

5.0 INFORMING STAFF, PARENTS AND PUPILS

- 5.1 A letter informing the parents of the introduction of a wellbeing dog was sent prior to the introduction of Luna and Rosco to the School. It explained what is being done, why and the perceived benefits to the pupils. It outlined how the use of a wellbeing dog in the School is being organised. It also included consultation on allowing their children's access to Luna or Rosco.
- 5.2 The introduction of Luna and Rosco was discussed with staff prior to their introduction. Staff with allergies and/or fear of dogs were identified, and any concerns investigated and considered.
- 5.3 A pupil briefing was given in assembly. It included:
- a reminder to pupils of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog;
 - pupils should remain calm around the dog;
 - pupils should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating;
 - pupils will not be allowed to play roughly with the dog;
 - if the dog is surrounded by a large number of pupils, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that s/he monitors the situation;
 - pupils should not eat close to the dog;
 - pupils should be careful to stroke the dog on her body, chest, and back and not by her face or top of head;
 - pupils should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- 5.4 All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival. Office staff will relay any visitor issues to the Head of External Relations (Senior) or Director of Studies (Prep) immediately.
- 5.5 Any concerns, issues or complaints raised by staff, pupils or visitors will be passed immediately to the Head of External Relations or Director of Studies for response and action.

6.0 INTRODUCTION OF LUNA AND ROSCO INTO SCHOOL AS A WELLBEING DOG

- 6.1 Luna and Rosco had a phased introduction to the school which enabled them to become accustomed to the sounds and smells and the general daily school environment.
- 6.2 Luna was initially timetabled to work under the control of five members of staff – the Head of External Relations, the Head of Learning Support, the School Counsellor and the Head of Year Administrator and the Head of Year 10.
- 6.3 Rosco was originally timetabled to work under the control of two members of staff – the Director of Studies and the Prep School Administrator.
- 6.4 Once the phased introduction was complete, Luna and Rosco were introduced to the staff and pupils. During this time, they were closely monitored by Mrs Wren/Mrs Hubbard and other designated staff members.
- 6.5 All pupils in the School received an introductory briefing on health and safety and how to work with Luna/Rosco – see para 5.3 above – before being introduced to them.



7.0 DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT OF THE WELLBEING DOG

- 7.1 Luna and Rosco's work is organised around their needs for food, rest and exercise. Dog beds have been supplied in their quiet place and in any room they are located in for long periods of time.
- 7.2 Luna and Rosco each have a 'Doggy Bag' which contains a water bowl, treats, poo bags/disposable gloves, hand sanitizer, and a small toy.
- 7.3 Neither Luna or Rosco will attend school if they are unwell or have an open wound. If they have had sickness or diarrhoea, then they should be clear for a period of 48 hours before returning to School;
- 7.4 Any therapy sessions involving Luna or Rosco will not last longer than 45 minutes. Luna and Rosco will have no more than 3 active sessions a day where they are required to engage with the pupils.
- 7.5 Luna and Rosco will have a rest in a suitable quiet location between sessions.
- 7.6 If Luna or Rosco is showing signs of stress or tiredness, then they will be removed immediately from the situation and taken back to their quiet base until suitably rested.
- 7.7 Luna and Rosco will be kept away from corridors during lesson transition times.
- 7.8 Luna and Rosco will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk, and will be under the full control and supervision of a trained adult at all times.
- 7.9 Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or bearing 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. If Luna or Rosco display any of these warning signs they will be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- 7.10 Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of Luna and Rosco working in the School. The School Office will know the whereabouts of the dog and which staff are supervising at all times. Any incident involving Luna or Rosco should be recorded in the Animal Incident Log (see Appendix A). Accident forms if appropriate should also be completed and sent to the H&S Manager following the School's standard process.
- 7.11 Luna and Rosco will be included in the fire evacuation procedures. A suitable place will be found for them to stand at the assembly point, and will return to their quiet base before the pupils are released back into the School.
- 7.12 Pupils will:
 - not have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with, the dogs;
 - not meet either dog in a group of more than 3 pupils;
 - follow the "approach, ask, pet, goodbye"
 - be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around Luna and Rosco every time they meet them.



8.0 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF THE USE OF LUNA AND ROSCO AS WELLBEING DOGS

8.1 Luna and Rosco's annual assessments will follow the School Therapy Dog Association guidance.

8.2 The assessment will cover 5 areas:

- documentation – current policy, risk assessment, insurance, signage;
- medical – up to date vaccinations;
- welfare – check Luna/Rosco's timetable, quiet place and physical welfare;
- discussion with staff, pupils and parents – a selection will be met with to discuss Luna/Rosco and their work;
- temperament and behaviour – to include greeting control, recall, stay, come away from distractions. Review of the Animal Incident Log.

8.3 If either Luna or Rosco fail any aspect of an assessment the School will implement a plan to raise her standards, seeking professional support if necessary.

8.4 The School recognises that Luna or Rosco may, at some stage, no longer be considered suitable for the role of a wellbeing dog. In which case they will be retired from working in the School.

Last reviewed July 2025

Next review due July 2026



APPENDIX A

ANIMAL INCIDENT LOG

DATE & TIME OF INCIDENT	REPORTED BY:	RECORDED BY:	DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT <i>Include details of any staff/pupil put in danger or injured / complete accident form if necessary</i>	PROPERTY DAMAGE	FURTHER ACTIONS