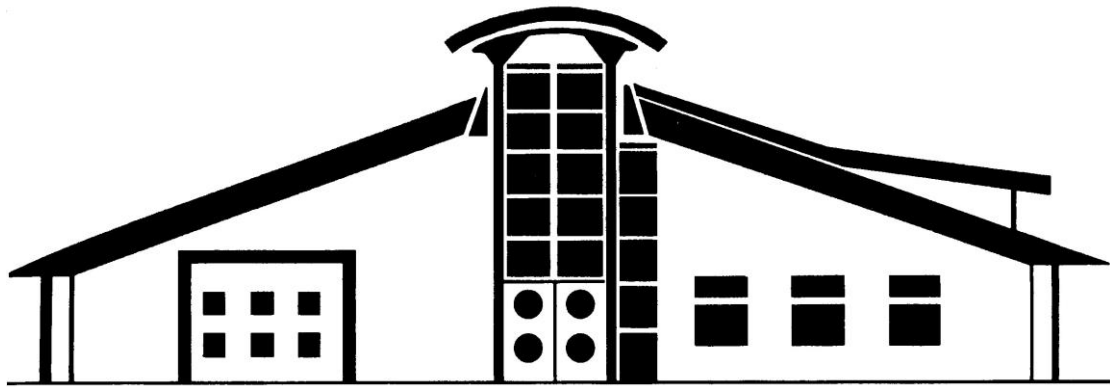




HOLMESDALE COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL



Pets as Therapy Dogs Policy

Approved by GovernorsNovember 2025

Review Date..... November 2028

Holmesdale Community Infant School

Introduction:

This policy explains how we will safely and effectively have our PAT (Pets as Therapy) dog in school and manage their role as part of school life.

We approached Pets as therapy dogs (PAT) as we believe there is significant evidence to show the positive impact of having a dog in school.

They included but are not limited to:

- **Cognitive** - companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem solving and game playing.
- **Social** - a dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, well-being and focused interaction with others.
- **Emotional** - a school dog improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. Dogs can also teach compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety.
- **Physical** - interaction with a furry friend reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, assists with pain management, gives motivation to move and stimulates the senses.
- **Environmental** - a dog in school increases the sense of a family environment with all the above benefits continuing long after the school day is over.

The Dog:

Will only attend school at times agreed with the Headteacher. The owner will always be present.

The dog is fully immunised, has monthly flea, tick and worm treatments, and is fully insured by Pets as Therapy (PAT).

The ongoing costs of pet care will be met by the owner.

Interaction with the Dog:

Under no circumstances will children have close interaction with the dog unless the school has permission from parents / carers.

Families will receive a letter introducing the dog. No child will be forced into interaction with the dog if this makes them feel at all uncomfortable. Any parent/carer can change their mind about interaction by informing the school office. All interactions must be safe for children, adults as well as the dog. If the following guidelines are not followed interaction with the dog will not be allowed.

All interaction must be under the guidance of an authorised adult.

The following guidelines apply to all interactions with the dog and must be followed by all adults and children:

- Always approach the dog calmly and slowly.
- The owner must be present for the duration of the interaction.
- Every interaction will start by allowing the dog to sniff the back of the hand.

- If the dog needs to move around school this will always be with the owner and on a lead.
- The dog will only be fed with the owner's permission.
- Adults and children will wash their hands with soap and water after every interaction with the dog.

Please see Pets as Therapy Risk Assessment in conjunction with this policy.