



### **Meet Taliesin.**

**Taliesin is an almost 3 year old Australian Kelpie X Border Collie.**

**He loves any ball, any treat and a fuss!**

**Taliesin has been in school since he was very little and he is a much loved member of the Wellbeing Team. Sometimes he has other jobs too, as you can see in this picture where he met Queen Camilla in his role as Reading Buddy!**



### **Introduction**

School dogs have become a common occurrence across schools and have proven to be a real advantage to school life. Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog. Appendix A sets out further reasons for why the school feels it will be beneficial to have a school dog.

### **Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment?**

Of course there is, though there are a variety of accidents which can happen within the school environment which far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by a dog. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be managed.

### **School Policy**

The dog will be owned by Keri Smith, the Headteacher. The dog is a Kelpie X Collie, chosen for its good nature, love of children, intelligence and receptiveness to training. Keri Smith will be responsible for the dog's regular visits to the vets, injections and inoculations.

The Chair of Governors and the Head Teacher have both agreed that the school can have a dog.



Staff have been informed that the school will have a dog. Parents have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. At the start of each academic year there will be lessons around the school dog and new parents will be given an opportunity to speak to the head with regards to the school dog. Keri Smith has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually. The risk assessment is attached as Appendix B

In the event of an emergency evacuation the adult supporting Taliesin will accompany him to the Fire Evacuation point.

Staff, visitors and pupils known to have allergic reactions to dogs must remain at a manageable distance. Parents are able to inform the school of any allergies on admission. If the dog is unwell he will not be allowed into school.

The dog will normally be kept on a lead and harness until fully trained within the Nant Celyn environment when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of an adult.

Pupils must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times when the dog is present with pupils. Pupils should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Pupils should remain calm around the dog. They should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog. Pupils should not to put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up. Pupils should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating. Pupils must not be allowed to play too 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.

Dogs express their feelings 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, licking lips, whining or growling are signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If the dog is displaying any of these warning signs he should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.

Children should not feed or eat close to the dogs.

Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog. As a school we will provide anti-bacterial gel.



# Nant Celyn Primary School



## School Dog Policy and Risk Assessment

Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School.

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy.

Teachers and staff and children are required to abide by this policy.

The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance as and when required.

**Policy written 07/01/24**

**Policy reviewed 01/09/24**





## **APPENDIX A**

### **Reasons to have a dog in school**

#### **Behaviour**

Behaviour problems occur in school and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in pupils. In a controlled study, pupils were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without. Pupils' behaviour improved toward teachers, and pupils also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents reported that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog at school.

#### **Attendance**

Children can be encouraged back into school using caring for a dog as an incentive

#### **Social Development**

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching pupils social skills and responsibility. Specifically, with a dog in the classroom, pupils have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving pupils in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The pupils also learn about responsibility, caring and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

#### **As a reward**

Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the pupils. Those pupils who have performed incredibly well during the week or those who have made progress in a certain subject, or those who have achieved tasks set for them, may be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with these dogs. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities pupils will be allowed to undertake. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem. Support Dogs can work with pupils on a one to one basis and will especially help those pupils who have been bullied abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the pupils they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the pupils they are spending time with. Pupils who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

#### **Reading**

Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some pupils. Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared to read to a dog. Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. With the presence of a "calm and well-trained dog," pupils find social support and peer interaction. Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have pupils read to them or join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session. Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling, emerging readers. The dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proved that pupils who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in interpersonal skills among the pupils they mix with. Bullying can be a problem in all schools with pupils anxious about school for fear of taunting and abuse. But in some schools dogs are making a difference in the fight against bullies. Researchers report that pupils can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. It was found that violent behaviour in participation pupils declined by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%



**APPENDIX B**  
**Risk Assessment**

**Introduction:**

The value of pet ‘therapy’ is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding. The team at Nant Celyn have been considering obtaining a dog as a school therapy pet for some time and previously engaged the services of an organisation providing a visiting dog. However, the Headteacher and the Governing Body feel that a dedicated school dog which is a daily part of school life is far more beneficial.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

- For the school to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.
- For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
- To have a pet that the children could interact with and also be of benefit to the children’s social and emotional development.
- The impact on the school budget paying for visiting dog organisations to bring a dog to Nant Celyn for one or two sessions a week.

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. Any parent who does not want their child to interact with Taliesin is invited to write to the Headteacher and inform her of their wishes. There are no diseases associated with the dog as his vet will be responsible for vaccinations, including rabies and completing regular health checks and necessary treatment. A copy of Taliesin’s health records will be updated and kept in school. Taliesin will also be insured.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff and the governing body.

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Risk 1 - 5</b>	<b>Controls in place</b>	<b>Review date</b>
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to the ground.	2	The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.	
	Child scratched by dog.	2	Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.	
	Child bitten by dog.	3	The dog will always be on a lead or held via his harness when he is not in the school office while the children are in school.  Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions.  Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to the whole school through assemblies and PSHE sessions.  Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog	



			<p>from chasing them.</p> <p>The dog has undergone formal training from the age of 12 weeks with an experienced dog trainer.</p> <p>Risk of scratching and biting will reduce, and the risk assessment will be reviewed as he progresses through his weekly training.</p> <p>All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.</p> <p>An additional 6 adults across the school are trained to work with the dog and children.</p> <p>The dog will attend the vets regularly to ensure he is in good health and that his claws are kept short.</p>	
Child or adult has a 'phobia' or is scared of dogs.	<p>Child or adult is afraid to be around the dog.</p> <p>Child or adult does not want to work with dog.</p>	3	<p>Parents and carers will be required to give permission for their child to have contact with the school dog.</p> <p>Children and adults are encouraged but <b>never forced</b> to have contact with the dog.</p> <p>Where there are children and adults with phobias, every effort is made to segregate the school dog from those with phobias.</p> <p>Over time, research and experience shows that children become less afraid of the dog when they are often exposed in an unthreatening and sensitive way. This is particularly aided alongside lessons familiarising children with looking after dogs and being safe around dogs.</p>	
The dog causing allergies.	Children or staff have allergic reactions	3	<p>Parents will have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies before the introduction of the dog to the school.</p> <p>A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will be kept in school.</p> <p>The children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog</p>	
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	2	<p>Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way.</p> <p>He will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds</p>	



			<p>that children have limited access to. The area will be disinfected as required.</p> <p>All immunisations are kept up to date in accordance with the European Pet Passport Scheme and a record will be kept of this.</p> <p>Flea treatment is carried out at monthly intervals.</p> <p>The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at mealtimes; and never in the food preparation area.</p>	
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep.	School unable to afford the ongoing cost of the Taliesin's day to day upkeep or medical bills.	1	<p>The dog is ultimately the responsibility of Keri Smith both in a well-being and financial aspect.</p> <p>Taliesin will be covered for Public Liability Insurance via the school's policy.</p> <p>All health insurance and vets' costs are covered by Keri Smith</p> <p>K9 Train Time provided puppy training and support in school to train all adults working with the dog in his previous school and The Dog Mentor(s) have received training, resources and advice for staff at Nant Celyn. Feb 2024</p>	

- KEY: 1- Low risk  
 2  
 3 -Medium risk of injury  
 4  
 5-High risk of injury