



## HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDANCE

DATE:	Nov 2020	VERSION:	8
REVIEW DATE:	Nov 2022		
SUBJECT:	<b>DOGS ON SCHOOL PREMISES</b>		

Nov 2020 V8 updated links to Secured by Design

### Introduction

1. All Governing bodies have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children, staff and visitors to the site, schools should adopt a local policy as to whether dogs are permitted on the school site and ensure that this is clearly communicated to all parents and site users. (via school newsletter, website, signage outside the school).

### Guide and assistance dogs

2. The Equality Act 2010 requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to the workplace to facilitate the employment of a person with a disability.
3. Some children with medical needs are also protected from discrimination under this Act thus responsible bodies for schools must not discriminate against disabled pupils in relation to their access to education and associated services.
4. A guide or assistance dog being permitted on a school site would be deemed reasonable and the setting would need to make reasonable provision to accommodate both the owner's and dog's needs.

### School / therapy dogs

5. Agreement should be sought from the Headteacher of the intention to bring a dog into the classroom and this decision ratified by the governing body. Parents must be notified and a risk assessment conducted. A generic risk assessment for [animals in school](#) is available on the Grid and could be adapted for this purpose.
6. Phobias and allergic reactions must be considered as part of that assessment.
7. Children must never be left alone with dogs and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
8. Support /Therapy dogs should have been selected for their temperament and trained to ensure they are safe to work in a school environment.
9. There are a number of charitable organisations where further information can be found:
  - Bark & Read foundation <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/barkandread>

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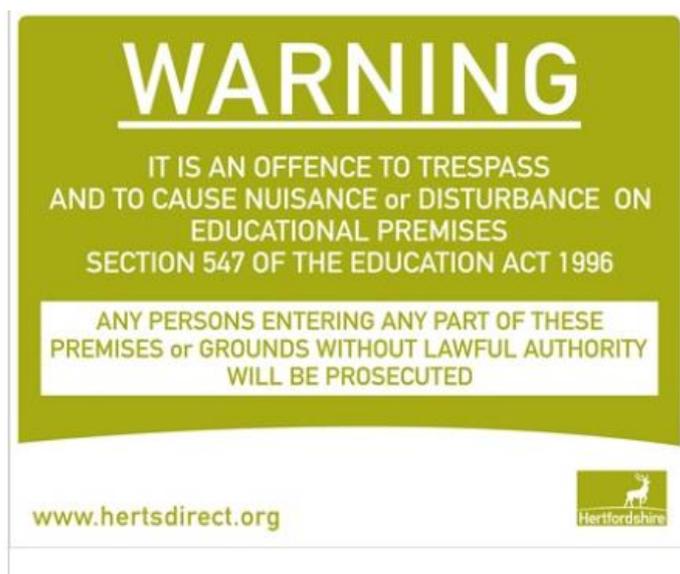
- Dogs helping kids <http://www.dogshelpingkids.co.uk/>
- Dogs for good <https://www.dogsforgood.org/community-dog/community-dogs-schools/>

### Causing a Nuisance or Disturbance on School sites

10. Schools are private property, thus persons entering without permission or lawful authority to be there may be treated as trespassers. Where dogs are being exercised or routinely brought onto school property this can introduce some potential risks to pupils and staff.
11. Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 states:
  - (1) *Any person who without lawful authority is present on premises to which this section applies and causes or permits nuisance or disturbance to the annoyance of persons who lawfully use those premises (whether or not any such persons are present at the time) is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale.*
  - (2) *This section applies to premises, including playgrounds, playing fields and other premises for outdoor recreation, of—*
    - (a) *any school maintained by a [local authority],*
12. Nuisance or disturbance has a wide interpretation, for example to exercise a dog or allow a dog to foul a playing field is to permit a nuisance and thus schools could consider taking legal action in such cases under Section 547.
13. Under this Act trespassers can be removed by a police officer or anyone authorised by the Local Authority or by the School Governors (in the case of Foundation and VA schools) provided there is reasonable cause to suspect that the person in question is committing or has committed an offence under the Section.
14. Headteachers need to use discretion in determining whether they, or other staff, are able to safely challenge / escort a trespasser from the site. School staff should not put themselves at risk.
15. If a parent or other visitor to the school does not conduct themselves properly then the school may write to them warning them that their conduct was unacceptable and that any further unacceptable behaviour could lead to them being banned from the school premises.
16. Copies of warning letters are available on the Grid, under Children's Services guidance 7 policies  
<https://www.thegrid.org.uk/administration/complaints-and-conflicts/handling-conflict-with-visitors>
17. Prior to issuing any such letter the school should contact Legal Services to seek advice as to whether a letter is appropriate under the particular circumstances.

## School Security

18. Reasonable controls to prevent unauthorised access of dogs to site can also be found in 'Secured by Design - Schools' published by the Association of Chief Police Officers and supported by the Home Office. This provides nationally recognised guidance on establishing and maintaining a safe and secure environment in schools.
19. A copy of this guide is free to download from the Secured by Design website.  
<https://www.securedbydesign.com/>
20. The boundary of the school should be clearly defined and consistent around the entire perimeter. Fencing and gates should be in good condition, at least 1.8 metres high.
21. For effective security weldmesh fencing is recommended. (Chain link should not be used for new installations as it's easily distorted or removed and is an ineffectual barrier to intruders).
22. Clear boundaries and signage removes any excuse for visitors wandering and aids staff in challenging those on site. There should be at least one notice in a prominent position indicating that school fields are private property, such warning signage is available from Herts Fullstop.



23. The number of entrance points on to the school site during the day should be reduced to the minimum practicable and preferably restricted to one, multiple pedestrian routes to be available only at the beginning and end of the school day. (e.g. locked / unlocked by site staff.)

## Stray Dogs

24. New legislation came into force in April 2008 that gave responsibility for stray dogs to Local Authorities. Any dog may reasonably be treated as a stray if it is roaming freely and not under the control of any person

25. Hertfordshire Constabulary do not deal with stray dogs. If you find a lost or stray dog please contact the Environmental Health department for your local Borough / District Council. <https://www.gov.uk/report-stray-dog>

### Animal Fouling

26. Simply by visually inspecting play areas prior to their use and removing any 'foreign items' such as litter, glass, animal faeces etc. then any risk to pupils will have been reduced as far as is reasonable.
27. In order to remove these items safely staff should be supplied with appropriate equipment (litter picker etc.) and Personal Protective Equipment (gloves) in order to avoid direct skin contact.
28. Animal faeces found on school sites should be immediately removed and disposed of promptly (normally by double bagging and disposing in a suitable waste bin). Where this is the case any risk of infection / ill health is considered low.
29. Animal fouling of sand pits can be prevented by providing raised sand pits / covering sand pits when they are not in use.