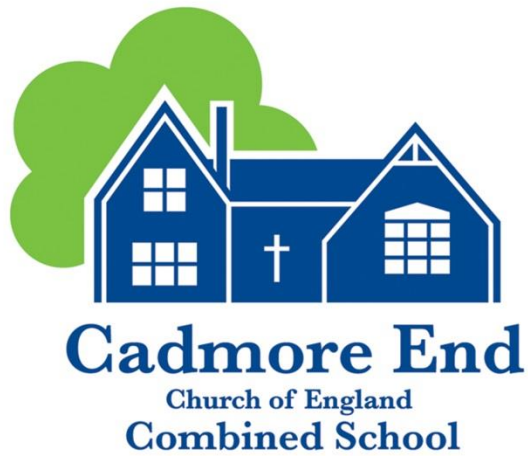




Dogs in School Policy

Policy owner	Headteacher
Authorised handlers	Mrs Debbie Groom and Mrs Julie Hazell
Approved by	Governing Board
Last reviewed	September 2026
Next review due	September 2027



1 Purpose and scope

This policy explains how Cadmore End Church of England Combined School and Nursery uses a trained Dog Mentor safely and purposefully. It applies to pupils, staff, visitors and volunteers who may encounter Millie on the school site.

Millie is a trained chocolate Labrador Dog Mentor who normally attends school each Friday. Her role forms part of the school's mental health, wellbeing, relational and inclusion provision. Activities may include Pawsitive Start breakfast club, individual and small-group wellbeing work, reading, communication, confidence-building, emotional regulation and supported social interaction.

This is a non-statutory school policy. It supports the school's duties under health and safety, equality, safeguarding, data-protection and animal-welfare legislation. It must be read alongside the activity risk assessment and the school policies listed in section 14.

2 Guiding principles

- The safety, welfare and dignity of pupils, staff and Millie are equally important.
- Contact with Millie is voluntary and requires prior parental consent.
- Children with allergies, medical needs, cultural considerations or phobias will be supported through appropriate adjustments or alternative provision.
- Millie will never be forced to interact and may be withdrawn from any activity by a handler.
- Activities will be planned, supervised and proportionate to the age, development and needs of the pupils involved.
- Millie may work with Nursery, Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils where the controls in this policy and the risk assessment are followed.

3 Millie and authorised handlers

Mrs Debbie Groom and Mrs Julie Hazell are Millie's authorised trained handlers. A handler retains responsibility for Millie whenever she is on the school site. Other staff may support sessions but must not take sole responsibility for Millie unless formally authorised and appropriately trained.

The school will retain evidence of Millie's Dog Mentor training, insurance, microchip registration, veterinary care, vaccinations and parasite treatment. Microchip and emergency contact details will be kept current.

4 Roles and responsibilities

Governing Board

- Approve and review this policy.
- Receive assurance that suitable risk assessment, insurance and monitoring arrangements are in place.

Headteacher

- Authorise Millie's presence and the purposes for which she is used.
- Ensure the policy, risk assessment, consent arrangements and insurance remain current.
- Ensure incidents, complaints and near misses are recorded, investigated and used to review provision.

- Ensure appropriate information is provided to staff, pupils, parents and visitors.

Authorised handlers

- Complete a welfare and fitness check before each school visit and withdraw Millie if she is unwell, injured, unusually stressed or unsuitable to work.
- Supervise Millie at all times and monitor her body language, stress level, rest, water, exercise and toileting needs.
- Plan safe, age-appropriate sessions and stop an activity immediately if safety or welfare is compromised.
- Keep Millie on a lead while moving around the site and wherever required by the activity risk assessment.
- Maintain training, veterinary, microchip, insurance and health records.

Staff

- Check consent, allergy, phobia and relevant medical information before including a pupil.
- Support pupils to follow the code of conduct and hygiene requirements.
- Maintain appropriate supervision and report concerns, incidents or changes in pupil need to the Headteacher or handler.

5 Consent, allergies, phobias and inclusion

Written parental consent must be obtained before a pupil has planned direct contact with Millie. Consent may be withdrawn at any time. A child's own wishes will also be respected; no child will be required to touch or approach Millie.

Parents and staff will be asked to disclose known allergies, medical needs and significant phobias. Relevant information will be recorded securely and reviewed. Where needed, controls may include increased distance, use of another room, ventilation, cleaning, an individual plan or an alternative activity. Reasonable adjustments will be made for disabled pupils and pupils with SEND.

6 Preparing for Millie's visit

- The handler will confirm that Millie is well, clean and fit to work.
- The designated rest area, water, lead and appropriate equipment will be available.
- Staff will check planned participants against consent, allergy, phobia and medical information.
- Pupils will be reminded how to interact safely and how to recognise when Millie needs space.
- Rooms will be ventilated where practicable, floors kept clear and personal belongings placed out of reach.
- Millie will not enter food-preparation or food-storage areas.

7 Supervision and session arrangements

For an individual one-to-one activity, one authorised handler may supervise Millie and the pupil where the handler has considered the pupil's needs and the activity can be managed safely. Direct group sessions must include an authorised handler and at least one additional member of staff.

No more than eight pupils may directly interact with Millie at one time. Smaller groups and closer supervision will be used for younger pupils, including EYFS and Key Stage 1, or where pupils have additional needs. Pupils must never be left alone with Millie.

Sessions will normally be time-limited, with rest breaks planned according to Millie's welfare and the handler's judgement. Calm, cognitive or relational activities, such as reading and scent-based games, will be preferred to high-energy play.

8 Pawsitive Start breakfast club

Millie may be present in the same room during Pawsitive Start, provided she remains under the control of an authorised handler and is kept away from tables, food, drink and eating areas.

- Children will not directly handle or interact with Millie while food is being served or eaten.
- Food and eating equipment will be cleared before direct interaction begins.
- Children will wash their hands before eating and after any contact with Millie.
- Millie will not be fed by pupils and her food, treats, bowls and equipment will remain separate from human food and utensils.
- Food-allergy, dog-allergy, medical and phobia information will be checked before attendance.
- The room will be ventilated and cleaned appropriately.

9 Hygiene and infection prevention

- Hands must be washed with soap and water after touching Millie and before eating.
- Millie must not lick faces, open wounds or eating utensils.
- Cuts and grazes must be covered before contact.
- Pupils must not handle dog food, bowls or faeces.
- The handler will remove faeces promptly using gloves and double bags and will clean any soiled area with a suitable pet-safe product.
- Millie's bowls and equipment will be cleaned and stored separately from items used by pupils and staff.

10 Pupil code of conduct

Before taking part, pupils will be taught to:

- wait for the handler's invitation before approaching or touching Millie;
- remain calm and follow the handler's instructions;
- allow Millie to move away and never disturb her while resting, sleeping, eating or drinking;
- stroke only in the manner demonstrated by the handler and never pull ears, tail, coat or lead;
- never kiss, chase, tease, crowd, climb on, feed or play roughly with Millie;
- keep bags, food, medication and unsuitable objects out of reach;
- wash hands after contact.

A pupil who cannot follow the safety rules will be calmly moved away and supported to regulate and understand what is required before any future contact. Deliberate harm or threatening behaviour will be addressed through the school's Behaviour and Relational Policies. Suspension may be considered only in accordance with the school's Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy.

11 Millie's welfare

Millie will have access to fresh water, appropriate exercise, toileting opportunities and a secure child-free rest area. She will not be overworked or forced to participate. The handler will remove her immediately if she shows stress, fear, fatigue, pain, illness or a wish to disengage. Her five welfare needs under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 will be respected at all times.

12 Incidents and emergencies

Bite, scratch or injury

The pupil or adult will be separated safely from Millie, assessed by a qualified first aider and treated in accordance with the First Aid Policy and current NHS advice. Parents or carers will be informed promptly. The incident will be recorded and investigated, and Millie will not resume work until the Headteacher has reviewed the circumstances, the risk assessment and any professional advice required.

Allergic or medical reaction

Contact with Millie will stop immediately. Staff will follow the pupil's healthcare arrangements, the First Aid Policy and emergency procedures, including calling 999 where required. Parents or carers will be informed and the risk assessment reviewed.

Escape or loss of control

Pupils will be moved to a safe supervised area. Staff must not encourage pupils to chase or catch Millie. The handler will implement the agreed recovery procedure and notify the Headteacher.

Evacuation, lockdown or invacuation

Millie will be included in the school's emergency procedures and remain under the control of an authorised handler. Human safety takes priority. The handler will use the safest available route or secure location and will not impede the evacuation or protection of pupils and staff.

13 Safeguarding, records and confidentiality

Dog Mentor work does not replace professional mental health, SEND, safeguarding or therapeutic provision. Any disclosure or safeguarding concern arising during a session must be recorded on CPOMS and reported to the DSL without delay. Personal information about pupils will be shared only with those who need it to plan safe and effective support.

The school will record consent, incidents, near misses, complaints, relevant health information, session arrangements and reviews in accordance with its data-protection and record-retention requirements.

14 Related policies

- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Relational Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy

15 Monitoring and review

The Headteacher will review implementation through incident and near-miss records, pupil and parent feedback, staff observations, attendance and engagement information where relevant, and Millie's welfare. The Governing Board will review this policy annually and sooner following a significant incident, change in provision, change of handler, change in Millie's health or training status, or relevant legal or professional guidance.