



School Pals

Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs 'School Pals' is part of our work we carry out with our dogs in schools, nurseries and colleges. We take our dogs in classrooms and libraries to aid children and young people become confident and happy readers. Our mission is very simple, reading with Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs will help young people form positive relationships which lead to building self-esteem, self-confidence and more importantly improve and advance their reading skills. Some of the children we visit have specific and additional needs and they may interact with our dogs in different ways. This maybe stroking or patting our dogs or going for a walk with our volunteers holding an additional lead.

Our dogs motivate children and encourage them to enjoy reading in a non-judgemental atmosphere, promoting fluency, prosody and improving comprehension skills. We work throughout the UK and there are a number of organisations offering this service.

We have developed these guidelines in order for our volunteers, their therapy dogs and the setting including staff, children and pupils to work together so all understand their responsibilities in our visits. We want everyone to experience a rewarding visit and hopefully these guidelines will support visits.

1. Our dogs' health and well being

- We share the benefits that Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs can take into schools to benefit pupils and young people.
- We uphold our values set out in our mission statement of being enthusiastic, responsible, ethical, inclusive, embracing and looking towards the future.
- Highlighting our dog's welfare and wellbeing.
- Ensure our dogs are happy, healthy and ready to take on volunteering with their owners.
- Ensure that visits are limited to a maximum of two hours and that the therapy dog has access for breaks, water and a quiet place.
- Our school Pals have visited settings prior to educational settings. They have been with their owners for at least six months and are over 12 months old.

2. We ask that

- If one of our therapy dogs shows discomfort, tiredness, stress or anxiety they must be allowed to leave the session and return when and if they are ready.
- Our volunteer and therapy dog should be given a working space so they can sit, lay down and move freely.
- Our volunteers are asked to re-confirm that their dogs are fit and healthy annually to continue volunteering.
- Our dogs are not expected to mix with other animals including other dogs, cats, or other animals at educational settings.

- Our therapy dogs and their owners will wear their Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs uniform including their ID badge.

3. Safety, health and hygiene

- Young people, adults and children should be encouraged to wash their hands after the visit of our therapy dogs.
- Dogs who are sick, injured or have open wounds will not be allowed to visit.
- People who are sick, injured or have open wounds should not take part in sessions.
- Our therapy dogs will be up to date with their vaccinations or titre testing in line with WSAVA guidelines.
- Dogs must be treated for worms and fleas when necessary.
- Our dogs are discouraged from licking humans.
- Settings should ensure that their liability insurance covers visits by therapy dogs.
- Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs will supply a copy of their insurance and setting handbook including a suggested risk assessment.
- Our dogs will not be allowed off lead and will be held by the volunteer at all times. Dogs can be tandem walked with an extra dog lead.
- Our therapy dogs will not bark, jump up or paw at children and young people.
- Our therapy dogs will take treats gentle and also toys.
- Our therapy dogs will be identifiable as a therapy dog by way of wearing a uniform displaying our logo.

4. Our volunteers will

- Be accompanied by another adult who is employed by the setting at all times.
- Undertake a DBS by the setting or PVG in Scotland when required by the setting.
- Be familiar with the setting's Safeguarding policy and procedures in the setting.
- Withdraw from the session if they consider the guidelines in this document are not being met.
- Remove dog waste and dispose of it off site.
- Ensure their dog is clean, healthy and well-groomed before visits.
- Become aware of the settings risk assessments, fire evacuation and safeguarding policies.
- Familiarise themselves with the confidentiality policy.
- Not use their camera or phone to take photographs.
- Not share photos on social media, unless reshared from the setting's own page or group.
- Refrain from identifying young people and children outside the setting.
- Be the legal owner of the therapy dog.

5. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following a serious incident, whichever comes first.

6. Adopted 1st May 2026

7. Review Date: 1st May 2027

8. Signed: Maria Cottrell – Maria@jackandpals.org