WINDERMERE SCHOOL

PETS (with particular relevance to dogs)

POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Introduction

Pets, particularly dogs, are an important part of life for many families and are often included in day-today activities. Members of staff who are resident on site may also choose to own pets, which therefore spend most of their time within the school boundaries.

Whilst the school appreciates the positive attributes and values of pet ownership as a family experience, it also acknowledges that there may be some members of staff, pupils and visitors to the school for whom contact with some pets can be stressful, frightening or may even pose a threat to health where allergies may be involved. For this reason, only pets owned by residential staff and authorised by the Head are permitted on site, with the exception of guide dogs.

This policy therefore takes into consideration the needs and expectations of all members of the school community. It focuses, in particular, on dog ownership, but aspects of the policy relate also to other types of pets.

Policy and guidelines

1. The Governors and Head agree that residential staff may apply to keep pets in their licensed area of the school property subject to the limitations below, and by using the application form at the end of this policy. This includes their residential area and garden if it is attached.

2. Non-residential Staff, students, parents and anyone else visiting the school are not permitted to bring pets onto site.

3. Staff resident in school property are expected to ensure their pets are house trained and to do all they can to prevent pets from causing damage to school property. If there is an unacceptable degree of damage, staff may be invited to make a contribution to the replacement of carpets or redecoration of the property when they vacate the property.

4. Owners are expected to ensure their pets behave appropriately while on site and do not behave in a manner that can be interpreted as anti-social. This includes for example, chasing other site users, persistent barking and uninvited invasion of the personal space of nonowners.

5. Dogs must not be exercised on the school grounds except to leave site by any appropriate route or for short toilet breaks and then only when kept under close control and on a lead.

6. Pet owners must take proper preventative treatment against worms, fleas, ticks, etc.

7. Insurance. The school accepts no liability for the behaviour of pets owned by staff, nor for behaviour of other parties towards pets. Owners of pets are therefore recommended to have appropriate, in-date public liability insurance. If you choose to take out such insurance you are requested to pass a copy of this to the Operations Manager on an annual basis or whenever there is a material change to the policy.

8. Reasonable precautions must be taken to ensure that your dog is not able to escape onto site from either your accommodation or garden and owners must keep all boundaries in good repair to control this.

9. While in your residential area, pets must be kept under close control when pupils are present. If a student, member of staff or visitor is uncomfortable due to the presence of a pet then their wishes must always take priority and the pet withdrawn from the situation.

10. Pets are not permitted to accompany owners in school vehicles or on school related trips. This requirement recognises that some staff and pupils may have allergies or feel uncomfortable in the presence of animals and hygiene may be compromised by the presence of animals.

11. If a student specifically requests the opportunity to exercise or look after your pet this is permitted on the basis that you judge them competent to do this and accept responsibility for their actions while they are the pets' guardian. This must include ability to keep the dog under control, clearing up excrement and that they will be taking the dog off site to exercise it.

12. Dogs should not be left alone at any time, except in private property. The RSPCA (www.rspca.org.uk) provides information about ownership, including dogs in cars.

13. It is the responsibility of all pet owners to ensure excrement is cleared up immediately and disposed of by bagging. Staff in school properties with gardens are asked to ensure excrement is removed promptly and not allowed to fester.

14. Staff should not encourage stray cats and dogs to visit the school by feeding them.

15. Although there is limited public access to parts of Hodge Howe, much of the estate is private property and members of the general public or parents are not permitted to exercise dogs within the grounds. Members of staff should challenge any member of the public exercising dogs and ask them politely to leave. (Private residents in the Hodge Howe cottages are permitted by lease to walk dogs along the drive only for access and are not permitted to let their dogs from the drive way or off their lead).

16. Hearing dogs and guide dogs for the blind will be assessed and dealt with separately.

17. Non-domestic animals. The RSPCA advises that unusual animals kept as pets - for example snakes, terrapins, frogs and degus - are known as non-domestics or exotics. These are animals that have not been domesticated, unlike traditional pets such as cats, dogs, rabbits and hamsters. For this reason, the RSPCA regards them as wild animals that are kept in captivity and has certain concerns about how difficult it is to meet their requirements. The needs of non-domestic animals are the same as they would be in the wild and are often fundamentally linked to specialist environments, diet or a particular behaviour. This means it can be very challenging to look after them properly, which is a requirement of the Animal Welfare Act. For this reason, any application to keep non-domestic animals at school will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

18. Dog Breeds listed by Defra on the index of exempted dogs will not be permitted on site under any condition and if they are identified within the immediate School community the police will be notified.

19. The School will communicate this Policy and Guidelines to parents.

20. Any member of the School community or parents who have concerns in relation to pets on site should communicate these to the School.

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APPLICATION TO KEEP A PET AT OR BRING A PET TO SCHOOL

This form is to be used when a member of residential staff wishes to keep a pet at or bring a pet to school. Following consideration and approval or otherwise, a copy is to be kept in the staff members personnel file.

Non-compliance to the conditions of the Pet policy can lead to this approval being withdrawn

Name of person making request:

Type of animal:

Name of animal (if relevant):

Nature of request:

I agree to abide by Windermere Educational Trust Limited's policy and guidelines on pets.

Member of staff (signature): _____

Date: _____

Authorised by Head (signature):

YES [ ] / NO [ ] _____

Date: _____