

Risk Assessment for Rusty the Dog in the Workplace

Introducing dogs into the workplace can have several benefits, such as boosting morale, reducing stress, and improving employee well-being. However, conducting a thorough risk assessment is important to ensure employees' and dogs' safety and health. Here's a structured guide to assessing the risks:

1. General Risks

- **Allergic Reactions:** Some employees may have dog allergies, causing symptoms like sneezing, itching, or asthma.
 - *Mitigation:* Identify employees with allergies in advance and designate dog-free zones. Ensure proper ventilation and cleaning protocols.
- **Phobias or Discomfort:** Not all employees may feel comfortable around dogs due to past experiences or phobias.
 - *Mitigation:* Conduct a survey or have discussions to determine if any employees have concerns. Create dog-free areas where these employees can work.
- **Noise Levels:** Dogs barking or playing can cause distractions or stress.
 - *Mitigation:* Establish guidelines for handling barking or provide quiet areas for employees needing focused time.

2. Health and Safety Risks

- **Bites or Scratches:** Even well-behaved dogs may exhibit aggressive behaviour if stressed or threatened.
 - *Mitigation:* Require temperament testing for dogs before they are allowed in the workplace. Have clear protocols for handling aggressive behaviour.
- **Trips and Falls:** Dogs moving around could cause tripping hazards, especially in high-traffic areas.
 - *Mitigation:* Use leashes or gates to limit dog movement. Establish clear walkways that are free of obstacles.
- **Infection or Disease Transmission:** Dogs can carry diseases, including parasites, which may affect employees or other dogs.
 - *Mitigation:* Ensure all dogs are vaccinated, dewormed, and receive regular vet check-ups. Create hygiene protocols for employees after handling dogs.

3. Work Environment Suitability

- **Space Constraints:** Some workplaces may not have sufficient space for dogs, leading to cramped conditions that could stress animals or cause accidents.
 - *Mitigation:* Ensure the office layout allows dog-friendly spaces that do not interfere with work areas or movement.
- **Cleanliness:** Dogs may create messes, either by shedding, tracking in dirt, or relieving themselves indoors.
 - *Mitigation:* Provide designated outdoor areas for dog relief and have cleaning supplies readily available. Consider hiring additional cleaning services.

4. Employee Responsibilities and Policies

- **Unsupervised Dogs:** Dogs left unsupervised may cause damage or stress to others.
 - *Mitigation:* Establish rules requiring employees always to supervise their dogs. Consider using crates or gates when needed.
- **Distractions to Productivity:** While some employees may find dogs relaxing, others may experience reduced productivity due to noise or interaction.
 - *Mitigation:* Set clear guidelines about when and where employees can interact with dogs to minimise interruptions.

5. Dog Behaviour and Well-being

- **Dog Stress or Anxiety:** A busy workplace might stress some dogs, leading to negative behaviours.
 - *Mitigation:* Ensure dogs are well-socialized and provide spaces to relax away from noise and people. Offer regular breaks to take dogs outside.
- **Compatibility with Other Dogs:** Multiple dogs in the workplace may lead to conflicts or aggressive interactions.
 - *Mitigation:* Require that all dogs be well-socialized and that interactions be monitored. Limit the number of dogs allowed on any given day to reduce crowding.

6. Legal and Liability Considerations

- **Insurance Coverage:** If a dog injures someone or damages property, the company may be liable.
 - *Mitigation:* Ensure the workplace has liability coverage, including dog incidents. Require employees to provide proof of personal liability insurance for their pets.
- **Pet Ownership Guidelines:** Not all breeds or sizes may be appropriate for a workplace.
 - *Mitigation:* Set criteria for which dogs are permitted based on size, breed, and temperament.

7. Emergency Procedures

- **Evacuations or Emergencies:** Dogs may hinder evacuations in case of a fire or emergency.
 - *Mitigation:* Include dogs in emergency drills and ensure all employees know the procedures for evacuating safely with pets.



Summary of Control Measures:

- Identify employees with allergies, phobias, or concerns.
- Require vaccination, insurance, and vet certifications for all dogs.
- Establish clear rules and policies for bringing dogs to work, including leash, supervision, and behaviour guidelines.
- Set up dog-free zones and manage the number of dogs present to minimise disruptions.
- Ensure the environment is dog-friendly, with designated relief areas and adequate space.

Regular Review

Conduct periodic reviews of the policy to ensure it remains relevant and that any incidents or concerns are addressed promptly.

Risk Assessment: Dogs in the Workplace

Date: Monday 16th September 2024

Location: St Thomas CE Academy

Assessor Name: David Powell

Review Date: September 2025

Activity/Task: Allowing dogs in the workplace

Hazards Identified:

1. **Allergies to dogs**
 2. **Dog bites or scratches**
 3. **Dog-related accidents (trips, falls)**
 4. **Noise disturbances (barking)**
 5. **Employee anxiety or phobias about dogs**
 6. **Dog stress or anxiety in a busy environment**
 7. **Disease or parasite transmission**
 8. **Property damage caused by dogs**
 9. **Distraction from work productivity**
 10. **Conflicts between dogs**
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Hazard	Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Risk Rating
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Risk Assessment Matrix

Allergies	Employees with dog allergies may suffer symptoms such as sneezing, itching, or asthma.	Medium	Likely if not mitigated	Medium
Bites/Scratches	Potential injury to employees from dog aggression or playful behaviour	High	Unlikely but possible	Medium
Trips/Falls	Dogs moving freely could create tripping hazards, especially in confined spaces.	Medium	Possible	Medium
Noise (Barking)	Dogs barking or making noise may disturb employees or meetings	Low	Likely at times	Low
Employee Anxiety/Phobia	Some employees may be uncomfortable or scared around dogs	Medium	Likely	Medium
Dog Stress/Anxiety	Dogs may become stressed by loud or busy environments, leading to unpredictable behaviour.	Medium	Possible	Medium
Disease Transmission	Dogs may carry diseases or parasites that could affect other dogs or employees.	High	Unlikely with vaccination policies	Low
Property Damage	Dogs may chew furniture, damage equipment, or cause other property damage	Low	Unlikely	Low
Work Distractions	Employees may be distracted by the presence of dogs, affecting productivity.	Low	Likely	Low
Dog Conflicts	Multiple dogs in the same space may fight or act aggressively toward one another.	High	Possible	High

Control Measures:

1. **Allergies**
 - Survey staff for any known allergies.
 - Create dog-free zones where employees with allergies can work without exposure.
 - Improve workplace ventilation and cleanliness.
 2. **Dog Bites/Scratches**
 - Require that all dogs are well-behaved and trained.
 - Implement a screening process to ensure dogs with aggressive tendencies are not allowed.
 - Have clear guidelines for dealing with any incidents.
 3. **Trips/Falls**
 - Keep dogs on leashes or in designated areas.
 - Ensure walkways are clear of obstacles to minimise tripping hazards.
 - Establish designated areas for dogs to roam under supervision.
 4. **Noise (Barking)**
 - Develop a protocol for dealing with excessive noise, such as removing disruptive dogs from the area.
 - Allow employees to work in quiet zones if needed.
 5. **Employee Anxiety/Phobia**
 - Allow employees to opt out of working near dogs.
 - Provide safe, dog-free work zones.
 - Conduct training or orientation on dog behaviour to alleviate fears.
 6. **Dog Stress/Anxiety**
 - Limit the number of dogs in the workplace at any one time.
 - Create quiet spaces for dogs to rest away from busy or loud areas.
 - Ensure regular outdoor breaks to allow dogs time to relieve stress.
 7. **Disease/Parasite Transmission**
 - Require proof of vaccination and regular veterinary check-ups for all dogs.
 - Institute hygiene measures, such as handwashing after handling dogs.
 - Have cleaning protocols in place for any dog-related messes.
 8. **Property Damage**
 - Dogs must be under control at all times.
 - Set boundaries for where dogs are allowed and keep valuable equipment in dog-free areas.
 - Employees bringing dogs must be responsible for any damages.
 9. **Work Distractions**
 - Set clear policies regarding when and where dogs can interact with employees.
 - Encourage dog owners to manage their dog's behaviour to prevent distractions.
 10. **Dog Conflicts**
 - Ensure that dogs allowed in the workplace are well-socialized.
 - Monitor interactions between dogs to prevent conflicts.
 - Limit the number of dogs in the workplace at any time.
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Additional Considerations:

- Ensure liability insurance is in place to cover any incidents involving dogs.
 - Regularly review the policy and update it based on feedback and incidents.
 - Provide staff with training on workplace safety with dogs present.
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Risk Rating Summary:

Overall Risk Level **Medium**

Assessor Signature: David Powell

Manager Signature: