

The Dog Mentor



School Dogs Improving Educational, Social,
Emotional and Therapeutic Outcomes
Through Targeted Interventions



What is The Dog Mentor Programme?



- The Dog Mentor is an end-to-end service providing everything you need to be able to introduce a dog into any educational setting
- It covers dog training and assessment for suitability to be in school
- Full staff training in all types of intervention, learning theories, insurance, risk management and lots more
- Full ongoing support and access to online resources
- Monthly newsletters and CPD training which are a combination of both dog training or education related

- Established by Jenny Duckworth in 2013
- Jenny, with a teaching background, previously managed a Pupil Referral Unit
- Trained as a dog instructor through the Institute of Modern Dog Trainers
- Certified as a Pets As Therapy Assessor
- Collaborated with local schools, incorporating dogs in pupil interactions
- Responding to high demand, devised a training programme enabling teachers to introduce dogs in schools through The Dog Mentor initiative
- Studied Neuro-Linguistic Programming and captured the reasoning behind how intrinsically linked dog presence and the positive development of an individual
- The programme mitigates the difficulties of having dogs in schools while improving curriculum wide educational outcomes
- Jenny leads the initiative to promote best practices for integrating dogs in schools
- Jenny promotes modern learning theories
- The programme is recognised by the University of Lincoln for research on childhood development in educational settings



How it works

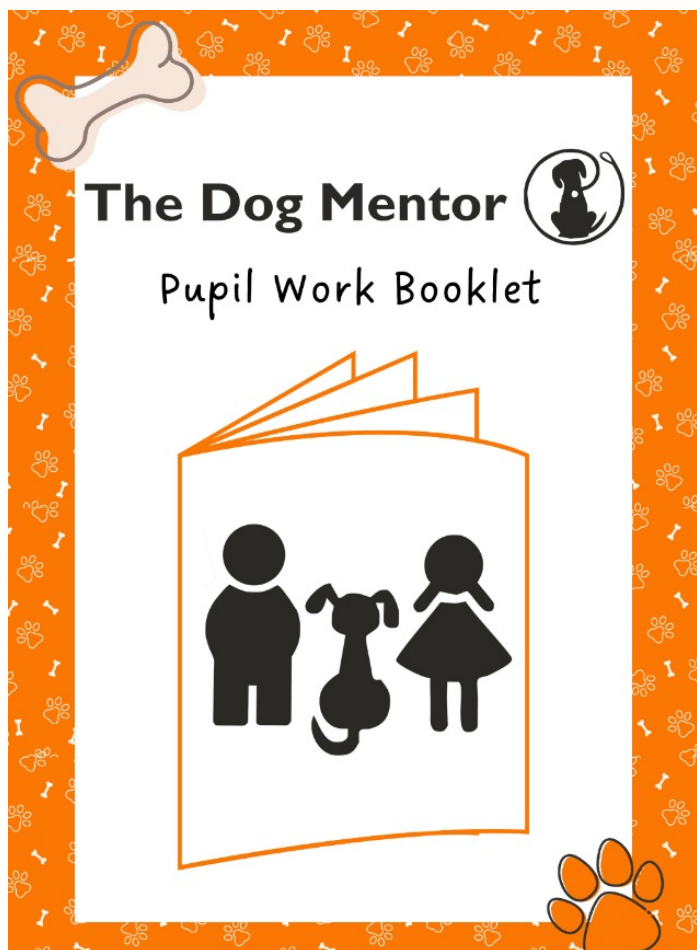
School identifies the need to implement the programme and makes contact

Suitable member of staff (with or without current dog) identified

Face to face course run in school in order to focus in each individual working environment, focusing on three tiers:

- **Bronze** – Dog Assessment for suitability to work in school
 - **Silver** – Staff training on all course modules
- **Gold** – Programme implemented across the organisation





The Dog Mentor Separation Anxiety

Learning to Say Goodbye

So a 'goodbye' is a 'good' experience. It's not a 'badbye' is it? We learn through healthy and secure attachments with our parents that when they go away, they say 'goodbye' and they come back again. We have a positive connection between being left and with endings. Wave while you say "hi" and "bye". It's often easier to copy actions than words when learning something new.

Make Saying Goodbye a Positive Time

When you leave your child, however sad or worried you may be feeling, smile and wave goodbye confidently and happily, otherwise they will pick up on your tension. It's often easier to copy actions than words when learning something new. By giving your child the experience of saying goodbye and then having happy reunions, you are teaching them an important life lesson.

Say Goodbye to Everything

You don't need to have someone physically leave and enter your home to practice the words "Hi" and "Bye". Anytime someone goes in and out of the room is a great chance to practice. Cleaning up is also a great way of practising. Say "bye" to each toy as you clean up.

Remind Your Child That You Always Return

It's important to make sure that you return when you have promised to. This is critical – this is how your child will develop the confidence that he or she can make it through the time apart.

REMEMBER YOUR

The Dog Mentor BREATHING

When you're calm, I'm calm.

We have over 600 resources available on Padlet to support best practices throughout the week.

Ofsted reports praising the positive impact of school dogs at Dog Mentor schools

"Leaders have introduced Stella, a school dog, under the Dog Mentor scheme. This initiative has had a very positive impact on pupils."

"The school invests in the professional learning of all staff. Staff value these opportunities. They swiftly apply their learning to support pupils. Staff are proud to uphold the nurturing ethos of the school. Morale is buoyant. Staff appreciate leaders' support for their workload and well-being. They, along with pupils, enjoy spending time with Jasper, the school's emotional support dog."

"All pupils are proud of Max, their well-being dog. They enjoy having him in lessons, taking him for walks and stroking him. Pupils say that Max promotes respect, calmness, focus and resilience when they work."

The Power of The Dog Mentor Programme



THE POWER OF THE DOG MENTOR PROGRAMME

Formulating a rapport and relationship with a dog provides children with a sense of having a protector. With their protector by their side children feel empowered to work towards overcoming their fears. The companionship provides a platform for children to develop self confidence and resilience.

DESENSITISATION

THE POWER OF THE DOG MENTOR PROGRAMME

STRESS COPING STRATEGIES

Some children find it difficult to handle stress levels in a healthy way. Play naturally releases stress, combine this with interacting with a dog and you provide a child with a relaxation experience unprecedented to any other. Through cuddling, petting, grooming and playing with the dog, children can focus on the present moment and set aside their worries and fears.



THE POWER OF THE DOG MENTOR PROGRAMME

ANXIETY REDUCTION

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A variety of anxiety problems can be addressed by the presence of a dog as it creates a calming influence helping to decrease blood pressure and stress responses.

Children also become less self conscious of themselves as their attention is focused on the dog instead.



THE POWER OF THE DOG MENTOR PROGRAMME

SOCIAL INTERACTION & RELATIONSHIPS

Working with a dog provides children the opportunity to develop a unique experience whereby they can return empathy, learn to share and understand to consider the needs of the dog before their own. Creating trust through their relationship with the dog they develop the skills to help towards building better relationships with peers and adults.


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the power of the dog mentor programme

ATTENTION AND BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES

ATTENTION ISSUES AND DISORDERS ARE MOST COMMONLY ASSOCIATED WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD), BUT THEY CAN ALSO BE CAUSED BY OTHER THINGS, INCLUDING ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, LEARNING DISORDERS, SENSORY PROBLEMS AND TRAUMA. STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THE PRESENCE OF A TRAINED THERAPY DOG HAS HELPED:

- INCREASE CHILDREN'S ATTENTION AND CONCENTRATION PERFORMANCE
- PROVIDE AN OUTLET FOR EXCESS ENERGY
- PROVIDE A NON-JUDGMENTAL COMPANION
- PROVIDE SOCIAL INTERACTION OPPORTUNITIES
- ENCOURAGE ROUTINES
- DECREASE STRESS
- OFFER A HEALTHY DISTRACTION



The Power of the Dog Mentor Programme

communication and social anxieties

Children with social communication disorder have difficulty using language in social situations. Studies have shown play with a dog encourages children to communicate verbally by telling stories and comfortably being able to share any worries. It always encourages non-verbal communication through use of hand signals, body posture, petting and grooming..

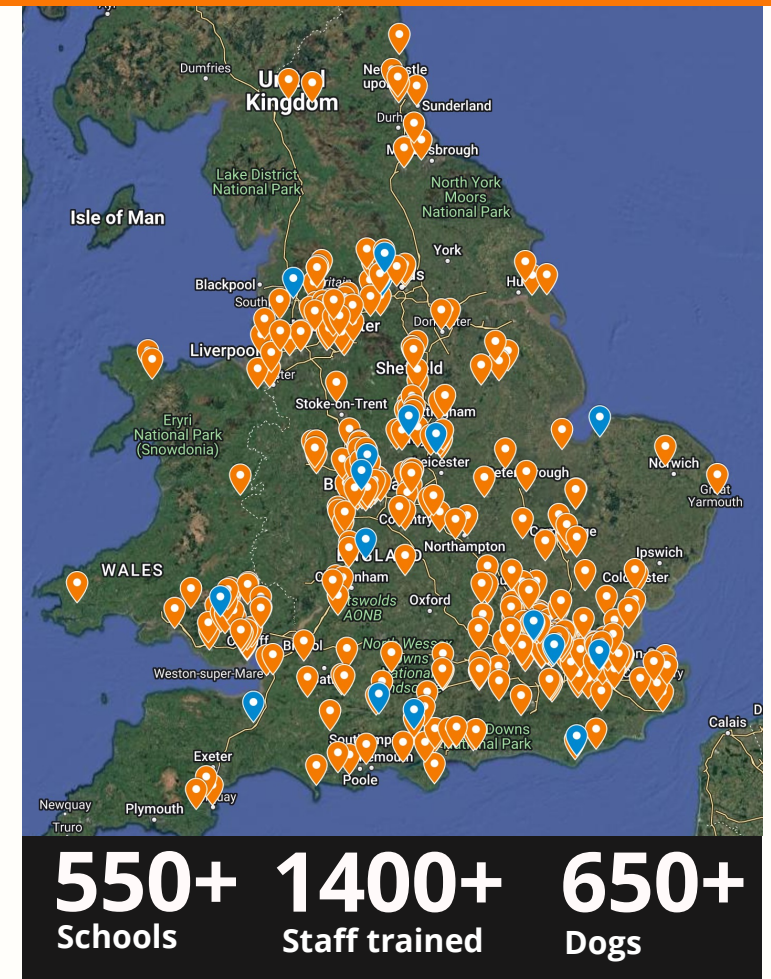


The Dog Mentor Family

Covers the entire UK and has branched into Europe.

Implemented directly on-site in many state and private educational settings including:

- Nursery
- Infant/Primary
- Secondary
- SEN/SEMH support provisions
- Boarding schools
- Children's residential homes



International Society for Anthrozoology

At ISAZ 2024, Jenny presented her emerging trend abstract, “The Dog Mentor: School Dogs Improving Educational, Social, Emotional, and Therapeutic Outcomes Through Targeted Interventions.” Her presentation highlighted how school dogs positively impact students. The University of Lincoln’s team supported her submission by offering expertise in developmental psychology, human-animal interactions, and educational interventions, ensuring a strong, evidence-based presentation. This collaboration emphasised the growing role of canine interventions in enhancing children’s learning and emotional well-being.



Research – The University of Lincoln



The Dog Mentor is collaborating with the University of Lincoln's academic research team to explore the benefits of school dogs in educational settings. By combining practical experience with scientific research, the partnership aims to capture how school dogs positively impact students' emotional well-being, learning, and behaviour. Through this collaboration, the initiative seeks to provide evidence-based insights into how canine companionship can enhance the school environment and support the holistic development of children.

The research programme kicked off in October 2024 and the results will be presented at the ISAZ 2025 conference in Canada.

BBC Radio Kent

In November 2024, Jenny appeared on BBC Radio Kent to talk about The Dog Mentor with Dog Mentor Lucy.



What's included

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Suitable member of staff (with or without current dog) identified

Face to face course run in school in order to focus on each individual working environment, focusing on three tiers:

- **Bronze** – Dog Assessment for suitability to work in school
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Each organisation is provided with:

- Attendee resources
- Two types of intervention work booklets
- Pet welfare record book
- Staff Wellbeing Resources
- The Dog Mentor Licence
- Personalised coat
- Bandana, collar and lead
- Full Risk Assessments
- Ongoing support after training for all members of the educational community
- Access to private Padlet site with over 600 pupil resources, parental and staff communication collateral Padlet has booklets



Thank You



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