

## Seven-year-old girl savaged by dog at school

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A seven-year-old girl was savaged by a dog as she played at her school, it emerged today.

Hannah Russell had approached the animal, which was tied to a gate outside Woodfield Junior School, in Cam, Gloucestershire, when it leapt at her face and attacked her.

The large black and grey dog - believed to be a collie-cross - bit the youngster on the cheek and shook her violently from side to side, before she fell to the ground.

Her mother Amanda, 38, who had just come to collect her, watched in horror as Hannah was left bleeding heavily after the savage attack.



Hannah Russell shows off some of her injuries (Pic: PA)

She needed seven stitches to the inside of her mouth, where the dog had hung on to her cheek.

Her father, Nick Russell, 48, said Hannah was with her four-year-old friend, Chloe, when the dog attacked her without warning.

"Amanda had gone to the school to pick up Hannah and two of our neighbours' children, Chloe and Jamie, at about 3.20pm yesterday," he said.

"They were walking out of the main gate and there was this lady there who had tied her dog, a collie cross, to the gate.

"Chloe went to see the dog and so Hannah went up as well and just went to give it a stroke, and it just went for her.

"It caught her a couple of times on the cheek, the right eye, eyebrow and also between her lips.

"There was an awful lot of blood and I thought her face was badly damaged, it was very worrying.

"She needed seven stitches to her gums and has got circular bite marks on her cheek."

The little girl, who has a 14-year-old brother, was taken to Berkeley Hospital to have the wounds cleaned, before being taken to Gloucester Royal for the stitches.

The dog was tied to the school gate just off the premises, meaning it was on public land and therefore covered under the Dangerous Dogs Act.

A loophole in the law means the authorities are powerless to prosecute if the dog attacks on private property.

Mr Russell said the dog's owner had approached his wife after the incident, and claimed her pet was not "bad tempered".

"Hannah is still very shocked and doesn't want to talk about her injuries.

"I'm not sure what I want to see happen to the dog. It's easy to just say destroy it, which I suppose I'm leaning towards at the moment.

"I would feel terrible if it happened to somebody else."

Gloucestershire Police confirmed today that they were investigating the incident and would be speaking to the child's parents.

Inspector Les Pritchard said: "We had a report from the child's mother yesterday. Apparently the dog, which is believed to belong to the parent of another child, was tied up outside the premises.

"It then apparently bit the little girl. She suffered facial injuries, but it isn't life threatening.

"Obviously we treat any attack by an animal on a child very seriously and will be doing as such in this case."

He said the force would have to await the outcome of the investigation before deciding on whether the animal should be put down.

The attack comes a month after five-month-old baby Cadey-Lee Deacon was mauled to death by two rottweiler dogs in Leicester.

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