

Frequently asked questions: School Dog

Q. Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays the costs?

A. The legal owner of the dog is Mrs Gibbon who will care for the dog out of school hours and bear the costs associated with this.

Q. Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A. Yes. We have researched reputable breeders and used one.

Q. Will the dog be a distraction?

A. The dog will be kept in the office area. The office area is separate from the classrooms / playground, to ensure it only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and who have parental permission, under strict supervision. We will be careful to ensure that contact with the dog is shared among the children fairly.

Q. Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A. Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog. There is a school dog policy available on the website.

Q. Who is responsible for training?

A. Mrs Gibbon and her family will be ensuring that the dog is fully trained. A registered trainer has been identified and the dog will then progress to PAT training (Pets as Therapy)

Q. How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?

A. There will be a designated area of school property for the dog. This will not be freely accessible to children. The responsible adults will always ensure that dog foaling is cleaned up and disposed of appropriately.

Q. How will the dogs welfare be considered?

A. The dog will be walked at lunchtimes. Parents will be able to give permission in advance to allow their child walk with a member of staff and the dog during this time. This will also be used as a behaviour reward. The dog will be kept in the office area and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to water and toys. We will work closely with other professionals to ensure the dogs wellbeing is always considered.

Q. How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A. The breed of dog has been chosen for its hypoallergenic properties, however, children will not need to touch the dog which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions, however small. We already manage a number of allergies in school and this will be no different for the children and staff who have allergies towards dogs.

Q. My child is frightened of dogs. How will you manage this?

Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised. Children do not need to have close contact. We hope to work with all children and parents to support and hopefully alleviate anxieties.