

# Therapy Dog- Developing Independence

## Cross Curricular Learning

### PSHE

Linked key skills: Making choices, communication, negotiation, risk taking, safety and knowing myself.

### Science

Linked key skills: asking questions, observing, identify and classify, suggesting answers, gather and record.

### Careers /Citizenship

Linked key skills: desire and enthusiasm, punctuality, working safely. Time management, identifying and solving problems, communicating effectively, fairness, knowing the rules, community, finance, rights and responsibilities and diversity.

### PE

Linked key skills: Balance, Agility, Technique, Co-ordination, Analyse, Tactics and Strategies

### RE

Question, Reflection, Discussion, Philosophise, Challenge and Connect.

## Context

Grange School and Prospect House both have a Therapy Dog (See attached Risk Assessments) Animals can help people cope with physical health difficulties as well as improving peoples mental health. For children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), animals are known to help them interact socially, reduce sensory issues, and support self regulation.

Students will experience key areas of learning linked to three core themes:

- Health and Well being
- Communication
- Developing Independence.

These core themes will be accessed at different wave levels of support across the school year.

We are confident that the therapy dogs will bring entertainment, joy and educational value.

## Key Vocabulary

### Concrete

The real life object

Dog

Lead

Walk

Bowl

Food

Treat

### Pictorial

Pictures of the word

Symbols that relate to the objects that are used in the concrete section. Symbols can also be linked to sensory story that is used as a starter.

### Abstract

The word written and/ or in a different context

Links to Know More modules:

Science—Our Pets

PSHE—Myself and my emotions/Healthy Choices

PE—General Wellbeing



# Wave Specific Interventions

## Wave One—Whole School

Therapy dogs will be in school and be able to provide wave 1 support to all pupils. Pupils will become comfortable being in a setting where a dog is present. Research shows that there is a strong bond between animals and humans which can be harnessed by pet therapy. Endorphins are released when animals are petted and this can produce a calming effect for the pupil concerned. Therapy dogs will be available to join class sessions where pupils are engaged in an activity such as walking, or being on forest schools, therapy dogs can act as motivation for pupils who find engaging with physical activity difficult. Therapy dogs will be available for pupils to spend time with where there are health and well being difficulties—for example a pupil being upset. Therapy dogs will be around school at transition points and can support pupils who are finding transitions

## Wave Two—Class based

Some pupils or groups of pupil will be identified as benefiting from wave 2 support from the therapy dogs—this would usually take the form of a small group with support from the class team. Pupils taking part in these sessions will become involved in caring for and exercising an animal and will begin to have a more positive view of themselves. Areas of needs could include; lack of engagement in class PE sessions, adverse childhood experiences, school anxiety, medical difficulties around health and fitness or identifies issues with SEMH. Objectives for these sessions could include: Reduction of stress; Increasing balance and coordination, Developing a sense of anatomy, Recognising Bodily functions, Learn and respect social norms and experience the pleasure of a sense of achievement.

## Wave Three—Individualised

A small number of pupils will be identified as benefiting from wave 3 support from a therapy dog. This would usually be delivered as 1-1 or 2-1 sessions and could involve other professionals such as SaLT or OT or members of the support for learning team. Areas of identified need could include: High levels of adverse childhood experiences, traumatic life events, medical and health conditions, levels of needs which require a multiagency approach such as joint working with CAMHS or children's services. Objectives for these sessions could include: To acquire or exercise the capacity to concentrate, To develop social interaction or team, To support the development of shared and self-regulation,

# Suggested Activities

## Activity One: DOG WELFARE

Gather utensils and ingredients needed to feed the dog, Steps should be followed to complete the task:

- ◆ Dog has specific bowl—shape and colour
- ◆ Dog should have a specific amount of measured food
- ◆ The right food should be used in terms of wet to dry ratio
- ◆ Allow the dog to follow commands as are appropriate—e.g. sitting before food

## Activity Two: DOG WALKING

The objective is to walk the dog safely and confidently. The pupil should interact with the dog in a relaxing environment. Several things should be done to complete this task:

- ◆ The dog should have his collar and school bandana on
- ◆ The leash should be attached to the collar
- ◆ Refuse bags and dog treats should be taken on every walk
- ◆ Planning a route for the walk taking into account the weather conditions for pupil and dog welfare
- ◆ Commands to be spoken to ensure the dog walks sensibly and comfortably

## Activity three: OBSTACLE COURSE

The objective is to complete a simple circuit of activities with the dog with lessening support. This should be completed in a calm relaxed atmosphere.. An example of this would be:

- ◆ Completing known commands and rewarding
- ◆ Going through a tunnel with the dog
- ◆ Playing fetch/throwing the dogs toy
- ◆ Walking a short distance with the dog independently

## Activity Four EMPATHY, PATIENCE AND RESPECT

By developing students ideas and skills in understanding the difficulties in teaching dog skills this can be translated into their own difficulties and barriers to learning. Solutions should be discussed and implemented.

# Resources needed/Things to Consider

- Risk Assessment for working with a therapy dog
- Key words and prompt sheet for specific dog
- Dogs Lead
- Treats for dogs
- Poo-bags
- Any equipment specific to intervention (e.g. balls, hoops etc.)
- Hand Sanitiser

What is the benefit?

- Unconditional Love
- Cooperative Play
- Taking Responsibility
- Developing Empathy
- The dog joining in!
- Collective Responsibility
- Student AND staff wellbeing.

# Communication

