



Friday 26th September 2025

Dear Families,

We are delighted to let you know that our school will be welcoming a new member – Dottie the tortoise! Dottie was looking for a new home and we believe that having a pet in school will provide many opportunities for learning and responsibility, while also bringing joy to the children.

We believe the tortoise will bring:

Responsibility and care: Children will take turns helping with feeding, cleaning, and general care, learning important life skills.

Learning opportunities: The tortoise will support science and nature studies, helping children understand habitats, diets, and life cycles.

Wellbeing: Animals can have a calming effect in the classroom, providing comfort and reducing stress.

Community spirit: Caring for a pet together helps build teamwork, empathy, and respect.

Important considerations and risks:

Allergies and health: Although tortoises are generally low-risk pets, we will ensure proper hygiene measures are in place, including thorough handwashing after handling.

Handling: Children will be supervised at all times to ensure the tortoise is handled gently and safely. If the children do not want to hold the tortoise this is absolutely fine.

Commitment: The tortoise is a long-lived animal, and we are prepared to take on its ongoing care, including during weekends and school holidays.

We will make sure the tortoise is well cared for and that all health and safety guidelines are followed. A risk assessment is in place. If your child has any allergies, health concerns, or worries about animals, please contact Mrs Colley.

We are confident that this initiative will bring both enjoyment and meaningful learning to our pupils, while also teaching them about responsibility and respect for living beings. We are very excited about this new adventure and look forward to having Dottie as part of St Mary's.

Many thanks,

Mrs Graham and Mrs Colley

