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**ELLIS
GUILFORD
SCHOOL**
*Creative
Education
Trust*

Wednesday 10 July 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing today to let you know that we have decided to take on a 'school dog' at The Ellis Guilford School.

Rationale

There is much research that has been conducted into the benefits of having a school dog. These include:

- Provide emotional support.
- Build relationship skills.
- Have a calming effect and help children to regulate.
- Encourage expression and communication.
- Foster a sense of responsibility.
- Help children to build confidence in reading.
- Improve attendance.

Many schools use the services of a Therapy Dog who visits their school frequently. Due to the size of our school, and to allow as many children as possible to benefit, we have made the decision to have our own school dog.

The Ellis Guilford School Dog will live with Mrs Johnson, the Principal, during evenings, weekends, and school holidays. The dog will reside in school during the school day.

At present the dog is 6 weeks old. Full training will be given to the puppy once it is old enough, to become a qualified therapy dog, when it will begin work with specific children.

Allergies

The puppy is a cavapoo. The puppy has been chosen for its non-shedding fur and hypoallergenic properties. This means that it is renowned to be suitable for most children that may have previous allergies to dogs.

There will be specific work undertaken with the children who have been or are identified as having an allergy to dogs. This will only be done in communication with parents/carers and once permissions have been given beforehand. Please ensure the school is always kept up-to-date with any details of allergies by contacting Ms Martinez - marie.martinez@ellisguilfordschool.org.uk



It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children, but that for many, it has the potential to provide positive benefits. Any parent/carer who has any concerns around their child having 1:1 contact with the school dog should write to parentcarerliaison@ellisquilfordschool.org.uk Please do so by Thursday 18 July 2024.

As the dog moves around school site, he will be kept on a short lead and children will always be able to keep a distance from the dog should they wish to do so.

By introducing the dog to the school and the children at an early age, it is hoped that both the children and the dog can become familiar with, and therefore comfortable with, one another.

Introduction

A gradual introduction process will take place. The puppy will spend time in school, getting used to the environment. At first, this will involve the puppy being walked around the school becoming used to his surroundings, and the children getting used to the puppy. The puppy will always be kept on a lead, unless in a controlled group activity as outlined in the risk assessment.

Training and Vaccinations

The puppy will undergo full training and will have temperament testing. After some time, the puppy will be trained as a Therapy Dog to work with our children. His vaccination programme records will be kept as part of the school's dog risk assessment.

We would welcome our parents/carers to come into school to meet the puppy, should you wish.

We will host a coffee morning at the beginning of the academic year in September 2024, when you'll be able to meet the puppy.

If you have any additional questions regarding the school dog, please do take a look at the FAQs attached to this letter. If you have any additional queries, please do email us at enquiries@ellisquilfordschool.org.uk

Kindest regards,

Mrs G Johnson
Principal



School dog Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the owner of the dog?

Mrs Johnson, Principal, is the registered owner of the dog.

Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

Yes. The dog has been purchased from a licensed and reputable breeder. Mrs Johnson visited the puppies in their home with the mother. The puppy was specifically chosen for its temperament, friendly and confident.

Who will be responsible for its initial training?

Mrs Johnson will be responsible for its initial puppy training and for its therapy dog training moving forward. Other named adults in school will also be involved in the delivery of this training.

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

There will be an area of the school grounds that is kept only for use by the dog for toileting purposes. The staff in charge of the dog will ensure to clean this away appropriately.

Which children will the dog work with?

The dog will work with children in scheduled sessions to support reading, confidence and emotional regulation.

The dog will visit children around the school site, but will always be kept on a short lead.

From time to time, there may be group sessions that will take place where the dog will be allowed off-lead in a controlled setting. Parents/carers will be notified if children are selected for an activity such as this.

Much of the 1:1 work with children will not take place until the therapy dog training has been completed. Until then, children will not need to approach the dog should they wish to do so. Even once the training has been completed, children will not need to work with the dog, should they not wish to.

My child is allergic to dogs. How will you manage this?

Please ensure we are aware of your child's allergy on the email below as soon as possible. We will contact you and work with you to ensure that we manage this closely. As mentioned above, we have chosen the dog breed carefully to ensure that it is as suitable for allergies as possible.

Please see the [linked Risk Assessment](#) for any additional queries.