



Mrs Sara Boyce MA N.P.Q.H

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Grow Together Shine Forever

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Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to Charlie!



I am writing to inform you that we will have a new member of our school community next term. We have decided to bring a therapy dog into school as part of our on-going commitment to improving pupil and staff wellbeing and mental health.

Charlie belongs to Pippa who volunteers for a charity called Canine Concern. She owns the dog and is responsible for its care and wellbeing. The charity, Canine Concern, carries public liability insurance and the owner is DBS checked and also has Charlie insured, covering third party liability.

Charlie has been assessed by Canine Concern as being suitable to visit schools and interact with children. Charlie will visit the school one afternoon a week and we believe there are many benefits to having a school dog, some of which are detailed below:

- Having a calming effect on pupils
- Improving behavior, concentration and self-esteem
- Reducing stress and anxiety, while encouraging expression and participation
- Motivating pupils and fostering a sense of responsibility and empathy
- Encouraging respect for animals and helping overcome a fear of animals/dogs
- Helping children build confidence in reading and/or discussion groups
- Further promoting our wellbeing agenda for pupils.

How have the school planned for this?

A full risk assessment policy has been written and is available on the school website. The volunteer and the dog will be accompanied by a member of school staff at all times who will lead the sessions and be present throughout. The staff member will supervise the child(ren) to ensure they act in a responsible manner around the dog. The dog will remain on a lead at all times and under the control of its owner. When not working the dog will have a place to rest away from the children. Parental consent must be obtained for any child to be able to work with Charlie so we would require all parents to complete the Google form to indicate whether you are happy for your child to be involved.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfTB_odlRWoYBZP4Prfk9ToC0TqRlrsqVhftcHEuWGBik1PdA/viewform?usp=sf_link



What about allergies?

All areas of the school are vacuumed and surfaces wiped down daily. Movement of the dog around the school will be limited and controlled and the dog will primarily be based in one area or outside (weather permitting).

What if my child has a fear of dogs?

We are very aware that some children are scared of dogs. Often this stems from one bad experience or from a fear held by a family member which has passed to them. We are very keen to work with fearful children in a controlled way to try and help them overcome their fear should you wish this to happen. Equally, if you would rather your child does not have contact, you can indicate this on the Google form (see link above).

We are all very excited about Charlie joining our school and I know there will be lots of parents and carers who support this new addition. However, if there are any further questions please contact us and we will be happy to discuss these with you. In addition, there is a lot of useful information on the Canine Concern website: canineconcern.co.uk

Before your child is allowed to have contact with Charlie the Google form must have been completed so please click on the link above and complete the form.

Thank you and kind regards

Mrs Sara Boyce
Headteacher