



3rd May 2017

Dear Parents / Carers,

WELCOME TO CHARLIE - OUR SCHOOL THERAPY DOG

I am writing to inform you that we will have a new member of our school community from next week. We have decided to have a School Therapy Dog. As a school we have been considering introducing a school dog since last year.

I would like to thank Class Vision for the research that they have undertaken with their teacher Mrs Davies, and also Miss Cleary who will be the owner of Charlie, our school dog. There are many benefits of having a school dog, and we have conducted extensive research, as detailed below -

- Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower anxiety levels, simply by making the environment happier and more enjoyable.
- Dogs in the classroom can be used to calm fears, relieve anxieties and teach skills.
- Over a period of time rigorous research has been carried out to ensure that we have selected the most suitable breed of dog for our school, pupils and staff. We have chosen to have a Pointer. Research shows that Pointers are intelligent, devoted, loyal and clean. They are patient, friendly, affectionate, love children and adapt well to new situations.
- Research also shows that Pointers are even-tempered and despite their large size, they make good house pets as long as they get sufficient exercise due to their high energy levels.
- A visit has taken place to a local primary school where a school dog is already successfully in place. This school shared with us their experience about the positive impact the dog has had across the school.
- Prior to purchasing the puppy our Deputy Head Teacher, Miss Cleary has visited the home of the breeder to ensure that the puppy's temperament and that of its parents, is suitable for interaction with children. The breeder has also provided a supporting statement.
- The puppy has been immunised and wormed in line with the Kennel Club's stipulations.
- The school dog will live with Miss Cleary, who has a five year old son, which will help with the puppy's development.
- Our school dog is a low shedding dog in order to minimise the chance of allergic reactions.
- There will always be a designated member of staff present during any interaction with pupils.
- A full risk assessment has been completed, and is available on request.

We will be training our school dog to become a certified 'therapy dog,' which will be regularly tested for health, obedience and temperament.

Any parent who does not wish their child to interact with the dog, is invited to write to me to inform me of your wishes. Alternatively please feel free to contact me on the telephone. Also, if your child has any known allergies to dogs then please inform me.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Marshall
Headteacher

Finally – Here is a picture of the newest member of our school.

His name is Charlie!

