

All Saints' School Dog



I am 35 days old, today!
I was born on the 1st day of spring.
I have six brothers and one sister.



Mrs Bedford and the Governing Body are delighted to announce the introduction of a school dog to All Saints. This will complement our dedication to the children's wellbeing and mental health.

This decision was also made having documented the positive impact that Monty, our visiting PAT dog, has had on the children, and reviewing well regarded academic research into the vast benefits a school dog can bring to the pupils and staff which include:

- 1) Improved academic achievement
- 2) Increased literacy skills
- 3) Improved attendance
- 4) Motivation of children who are often less attentive
- 5) Increased social skills and self-esteem
- 6) Provision of emotional support
- 7) Encourage calming behaviours, especially in children with special needs
- 8) Teaching responsibility and respect to all life
- 9) Animals also generate lessons that are interesting, memorable and lively and which offer many cross-curricular links.

In summary children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

After careful consideration and in consultation with Veterinary Surgeon and All Saints' parent Dr Jo Hillard, we will be welcoming a female black Labrador puppy in June 2019. A Labrador was chosen as they are an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and are known to be good with children, with a friendly, sociable nature.

The parents of the puppy have worked as PAT therapy dogs visiting hospices and schools. Mrs Bedford will be involved with training the puppy to the level of PAT qualification and has made links with behavioural therapists. All staff will receive training and the children have their training in May.

The dog's name will be voted by the children so all feel a sense of responsibility and ownership.

School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?

A The legal owner of the dog will be Mrs Bedford; she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; the school budget will support insurance and staff training costs where appropriate.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A Yes. The dog is coming from a breeder in North Yorkshire who breeds working dogs that are well known for their temperament and behaviour. Both parents have been health checked.

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

A The dog will be kept primarily in Mrs Bedford's office, but will be integrated into daily aspects of school life which will allow the children and staff to reap the benefits a school dog will bring. The situation will be closely monitored and adjusted if there is any concern that the dog is distracting children or staff from their learning or work.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog. The risk assessment will be sent via email and included on our website. This page will also include the School Dog policy in line with guidance from Surrey.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A Mrs Bedford will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for her training.

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

A In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks in the grounds. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, **cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.**

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A Mrs Bedford will be working closely with Veterinary Surgeon and All Saints Parent, Dr Jo Hillard, and a Canine Behaviour Specialist Dr Sarah Heath, to ensure that the dog is settled well into school and the medical and emotional needs of the dog are met.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A Children will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for any children or adults that are allergic to dogs. Studies have shown that Labradors have lower allergen levels and the dog will also be groomed regularly to ensure that any moulting at school is reduced. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies.

Q My child is frightened of dogs, how will you manage this?

A Access to the dog will be carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. We hope to work closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to allow them to gain from the benefits a close bond with dogs can bring.

Q What would a typical day look like?

A The school dog will come into school with Mrs Bedford and have a quick walk from the access at the back of school. The aim is this could become an early morning club run by Mrs Bedford (once a week). The dog would be kept on the lead wearing a Therapy Dog harness and would have a crate for sleeping in the Headteacher’s office. The dog (on the lead) would attend assemblies, visit classrooms and some playtimes as appropriate. We would run a lunchtime club for small groups of children to support confidence and reward effort and she would support reading in the afternoons. She would accompany Mrs Bedford at the end of the day to say goodbye.

Q What proven benefits are there to having a dog in school?

A There are numerous research papers outlining the positive impact of dogs in school which has led to Department of Education and well known educationalists recommending their role.

For example:

University of Buckingham vice-chancellor Sir Anthony Seldon backed the use of dogs as a way of reducing stress in schools and universities.

"The quickest and biggest hit that we can make to improve mental health in our schools and to make them feel safe for children is to have at least one dog in every single school in the country," said Sir Anthony. Education Secretary Damian Hinds backed his call, saying more schools seemed to have "wellbeing dogs" and "the pets can really help children in school"

Further links to research papers will be included on the school website.

If you have any further concerns please don’t hesitate to contact Mrs Bedford.

Please can we ask you to complete the permission below for your child to spend time with our school dog and add any suggested names for voting by the children. Thank you.

Permission for spending time with our All Saints’ School Dog

I give permission for(child’s name).....

My child is allergic to dogs Yes/No My child is scared of dogs Yes/No

Signed.....

Our family’s suggested dog name.....