



Brunshaw Primary School

Morse St, Burnley BB10 4PB

Tel: 01282 423280 enquiries@brunshaw.lancs.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs G Smith

29.02.2024

Dear Parents and Carers

I write to you with some very exciting news! During the Summer Term we will be welcoming Nala, the Therapy Dog, to school.

This decision has been made following extensive research, discussion with other schools who have a School Therapy Dog and approval of the Governing Board. A full risk assessment has been completed which is available to anyone who wishes to have a copy.

Nala is 3 years old and is a Golden Labrador Retriever and belongs to Lancashire Canine Academy. Nala will be accompanied on each visit to school by an accredited dog trainer & behaviour practitioner. Nala is a member of Lancashire Canine Academy's team of therapy dogs, which means she has public liability insurance. Nala regularly goes to the vet for yearly vaccinations, flea and worm treatments.

The children will only be able to interact with her under strict supervision and as long as parental permission has been given. She will initially be in school every Monday afternoon and Thursday afternoon.

When she is moving around the school she will be on a lead and always with her handler. We hope she will be able to support children in school in areas such as reading, nurture groups, with attendance and also being in the quiet areas on the playground.

Numerous research studies have shown the benefits of therapy dogs in schools. Evidence indicates that benefits include:

- Cognitive – companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem-solving and game-playing
- Social – a dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, well-being and focused interaction with others
- Emotional – a school dog improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. Dogs can also teach compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety
- Physical – interaction with a furry friend reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, assists with pain management, gives motivation to move, walk and stimulates the senses
- Environmental – a dog in a school increases the sense of a family environment, with all of the above benefits continuing long after the school day is over
- Reading – reading to dogs has been proven to help children develop literacy skills and build confidence, through both the calming effect the dog's presence has on children as well as the fact that a dog will listen to children read without being judgemental or critical. This comforting environment helps to nurture children's enthusiasm for reading and provides them with the confidence to read aloud



Resilient, Aspirational Learners





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With parental permission, over a period of time, children who are fearful of dogs can be supported in approaching, handling and in gaining confidence in managing their fear.

I hope the children will gain a lot of enjoyment from having a school dog and there will be pictures on the website and Class Dojo of all that she does.

It has been arranged for Lancashire Canine Academy to come into school and give all the children an assembly on how to 'Be Dog Smart' on 21/03/24. In addition to this, an introductory assembly has also been arranged on 27/03/24 for the children to get to meet Nala and her handler Marcia before they commence their regular visits to school.

If you have any individual questions or queries, please do not hesitate to speak to Mrs Atkinson or myself.

Please complete and return the attached slip by **22.03.24**. It is planned that Nala will begin to visit school from **15.04.2024**.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Smith
Headteacher

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Letter of consent regarding School Therapy Dog. Please complete and return by 22.04.2024.

Name of child _____

Class _____

Please tick as appropriate:

- ☐ I am happy for my child to be involved with all aspects of caring for the school dog, including supervised lunchtime play
- ☐ My child is a little nervous of dogs, but I am happy for him/her to be involved with all aspects of caring for the school dog, including supervised lunchtime play
- ☐ My child is fearful of dogs, but in time, I would like them to work with the dog to develop their confidence with and understanding dogs
- ☐ My child has an allergy which means they must not come into contact with the dog
- ☐ I do not give permission for my child to come into direct contact with the dog

Please can you also explain the following to your child and acknowledge that you (as parent/carer) have read and understood it:

I will not feed Nala anything other than food provided by the member of staff in charge

I will not throw items other than animal food or animal toys and only when staff give me permission

I will not stroke Nala without permission

I will not aggravate, hit, scream or yell at Nala or in any way act aggressively towards her

I understand that doing any of these things could result in the injury of myself, or someone in my group

I will not leave litter anywhere other than a bin

☐ As the parent/carer of _____, I acknowledge my understanding of the above and accept that failure to follow these rules or policies of school will result in my child no longer being able to be involved with animal assisted therapy

Name

Signed



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