



Lessness Heath Primary School

Erith Road, Belvedere, Kent. DA17 6HB

Tel: 01322 433290

Head Teacher – Mrs K O'Connor

Deputy Head Teacher – Mrs L Shields

Respect Belonging Co-operation Honesty Perseverance Responsibility

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you to let you know that the Senior Leadership Team at Lessness Heath have been considering the possibility of getting a dog who would work in our school as part of the on-going provision for wellbeing and mental health.

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. The dog will belong to Miss Bolton and will be living with her on a full time basis.

There will be a long period of integration into the school and over the next few weeks she will not be in any contact with any children. The dog will be ready to be trained to be a PAT (Pets as Therapy) dog from September and ready to work fully with children from October.

I understand there may be some questions:

What are the benefits of a school dog?

- A calming effect on pupils;
- Improved behaviour and concentration, reduced stress and improved self-esteem;
- Encouraging expression, participation and confidence for all children;
- Fostering a sense of responsibility;
- Motivating pupils to think and to learn, as most children have a high level of natural interest in, enthusiasm for and enjoyment of animals;
- Encouraging respect and thereby improving pupils' relationships with each other, parents and teachers;
- Teaching children to nurture and respect life;
- Helping work undertaken with the most vulnerable children;
- Helping children build confidence in reading;
- Improving attendance;
- Further promote our 'Well Being' agenda for pupils.

How has the school planned for this?

- A full risk assessment and policy has been written and will be available on the website
- When the dog begins working with children, consent will be sought for each child to have contact
- All contact will be carefully planned and children will not be left unsupervised with the dog

This school is committed to the safeguarding and protection of children



- When not working, the dog will be based in one of the school offices

What about allergies?

- Our dog is a Shih Tzu and the breed has low allergy and non shredding qualities
- All areas of the school are vacuumed and surfaces are wiped down daily
- Movement around the school will be controlled
- Any child working with the dog will wash their hands

How can I find out more information?

We aim to put a regular blog onto our website to keep parents and children up to date on the progress of the school dog.

Let me introduce you.....



Our dog is a 10 week old Shih Tzu who will be trained as therapy dog and used to support all of the children within our school. Over the next half term she needs to spend time in school getting used to her surroundings, and all of us!

I know there will be lots of parents and carers who support the new addition to our school however, if there are any further questions please talk to a member of the Senior Leadership team on the school gate or write to me in person.

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



I look forward to updating you on her progress.

Mrs Kate O'Connor

Head teacher