

Codsall Middle School – School Dog!

TED

We hope that, by welcoming a school dog to CMS, we can help pupils to feel more calm, settled and happy, allowing them to believe that 'all things are possible'. Research has proven that a school dog can bring many benefits to a school community from well-being of children and staff to encouraging reluctant readers to read and calming children who are dysregulated.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you getting a school dog? For a few years now we have seen an increase in the use of pets within schools. Now being able to review the impact pets in schools can have, we know that it will be great for wellbeing and happiness for both pupils and staff alongside helping to support learning in new and different ways!

Where will the dog be from? We have carefully chosen a puppy from a reputable breeder who has a long history in breeding dogs for both health and temperament. We have chosen a lurcher, he is a 50-50 mix of whippet and poodle.

What if my child is allergic to dogs? Poodles are hypoallergenic which a key characteristic is for a lot of people, especially those who have allergies. Our dog will be groomed regularly, to include brushing and a bath. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for those who are allergic to dogs/animals. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional measures in place where needed. Additional supportive measures will be assessed on an individual basis.

What if my child is scared of dogs? We understand that some people are scared or apprehensive around dogs. Access to our school dog will be carefully managed and supervised. We will be sending home a link to all of our information in September 2023, outlining how we intend Ted's time in school to be used. We will be asking parents to opt out for their individual children if they wish to do so.

Will my child have to come into contact with the dog? Access to our school dog will be carefully managed and supervised. Pupils/adults will not need to have any contact with the dog unless they are keen to do so. Ted will be part of certain learning opportunities within school, where there is any change to the environment for an extended period of time you may be notified by the class teacher or myself. If your child is happy to meet our school dog, there will be plenty of opportunities to say hello!

Will the dog roam freely around school? Absolutely not! Our dog will be supervised by a responsible adult at all times. We need to ensure that Ted has access to a quiet, safe space to escape the busyness of everyday school-life! The dog will be on its lead at all times when moving around school and when interacting with pupils.

Has a risk assessment been done? Yes - a formal Risk Assessment has taken place with support from Staffordshire County Health & Safety advisors. We have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a School Dog. There will also be a School Dog Policy, available for parents to view on our website.

How will the dog be trained? Mrs Connolly will be responsible for the dog training. Appropriate professional training will also be obtained; initially it will complete puppy training and then work towards becoming a well-being and therapy dog.

Will the dog be a distraction to pupils' learning? The dog will only come into contact with pupils who are happy to have contact with a dog under supervision. In the early stages, interaction with the pupils will be very limited as the dog settles into school life (but we will send you plenty of pup-dates!).

How will the dog's welfare be considered? The dog will only have planned and supervised contact with pupils and visitors. He will have food and unlimited access to water, a bed and some toys. He will be carefully trained over a period of time and we will work very closely with other professionals to ensure his welfare is always carefully considered and he is safe and happy in school.

How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all? In the interests of health and hygiene, the dog will be toileted either away from the school building in an area of the school where pupils don't access. All waste will be disposed of appropriately.

What about people visiting the school? There will be a clear sign on the interior school front desk that says there is a school dog on the school site and directs anyone with allergies or anxieties relating to dogs to inform the office immediately.

Are other dogs allowed on the school site? In order to maintain the integrity of Codsall Middle School's Dog Risk Assessment, only our school dog and registered disability assistance dogs are allowed on the school site except in very particular circumstances with the express permission of the Head of School e.g. for training or socialisation purposes.

Can we bring the dog gifts or treats? Our dog will have everything he needs and we don't want to spoil him too much, we are intending for him to be an exemplary member of our school. I am sure there will be times when he will be a little spoiled by all of us. If he does get any gift's we will ensure that he doesn't receive have them all at once!