

# High Littleton C. of E. Primary School, High Littleton, Bristol BS39 6HF

Part of the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

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Head Teacher: Mr Gareth Griffith

Friday, 13 April 2018



Dear Parents/Carers,

## School Dog

I am writing to inform you that it is my intention to have a School Dog at High Littleton Church of England Primary School.

### Why have a School Dog?

The school will work alongside a charity called Dogs Helping Kids (DHK). They are the UK's unique charity dedicated to using highly trained dogs to help teach children non-violence, empathy, respect, kindness, love, responsibility, friendship and trust. Our dog will also be trained to motivate, provide therapy and read with children.

DHK School Dogs are highly trained dogs who are of impeccable temperament, have undergone in-depth positive reinforcement training and who then have been rigorously assessed to clarify that they are competent and safe to work within a school environment.

A School Dog only becomes certified once it has gone through a one-year Puppy Training Programme and a two-year School Dog Training Programme. There are eight assessment points within both these programmes. Assessments include training, behaviour, welfare and temperament. Our School Dog would be further assessed on an annual basis to check its ongoing suitability to work within our school.

### Who is responsible for the School Dog?

As the School Dog will be mine, the dog will be my responsibility and it will be me who undertakes the training.

### Risk Assessments

DHK carries public liability insurance for each School Dog and owner training with the charity. The school will undertake a risk assessment prior to the dog joining the school.

The children and staff will receive training as well. This will include meeting and greeting dogs, safety around dogs, canine body language, responsible dog ownership and positive training.

Any child who we feel might benefit from working with our School Dog, will only do so with written parental consent. They will also need to follow a strict hygiene regime following contact with the dog.



It has been proven that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem. Many studies have been undertaken that give credit to the benefits of dogs in the school. There is no better place to educate our children on how to treat animals than that of the school environment. Animals in schools can encourage children to respect all life, teach responsibility, motivate those children who are often not that attentive, help calm children down and improve academic achievement.

In addition to this, if children are wary of dogs, they can be supported in approaching, handling and gaining confidence in managing their fears, through the presence of a specially trained dog in school.

### **Allergies**

You will need to make the school aware if your child is allergic to dogs. If this is the case, then we will ensure that your child keeps a safe distance away from the dog.

DHK School Dogs are highly socialised and strict supervision of children at all times will prevent any injuries from occurring. Our School Dog will only be certified if they are seen to be gentle and loving with children at all times.

Please do take a look at the 'Dogs Helping Kids' website to read about the benefits of school dogs and what they can do. <http://www.dogshelpingkids.co.uk/>

Within the next few weeks, I will be sourcing a puppy from a reputable breeder. The puppy will then begin its life as a School Dog at High Littleton Primary School. It will be based in my office, but will often be seen on a lead with me in classrooms, assemblies, at playtime and around the school.

If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours sincerely,

Gareth Griffith  
Headteacher

