



Midsomer Norton Primary School

'Part of the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership'

High Street
Midsomer Norton
Radstock BA3 2DR
Tel: 01761 412289
Fax 01761 415896

Head Teacher:
Mr Alun Randell

office@midsomernortonprimary.co.uk
www.midsomernortonprimary.co.uk

Monday 21st September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

School Dog

I am writing to inform you that it is my intention to have a School Dog at Midsomer Norton Primary School.

Why have a School Dog?

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility, respect, kindness, love, friendship 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.

The dog will be my own dog, Rosie, an English Springer Spaniel. Rosie is two years old and has an impeccable temperament. Over time, Rosie will be trained to motivate, provide therapy and read with children. Before she begins her new role as School Dog she will be rigorously assessed by a registered clinical animal behaviourist to ascertain that she is competent and safe to work within a school environment.

Rosie would be further assessed after 6 months and then on an annual basis to check her ongoing suitability to work within our school.

Who is responsible for the School Dog?

As Rosie is mine, she will be my responsibility. The amount of time Rosie spends in school will be gradually developed. When not in school, she will be cared for at home by my wife.

Risk Assessments

The school carries public liability insurance for Rosie as a School Dog. 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 Rosie, 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 Rosie.

Rosie is highly socialised and strict supervision of children at all times will prevent any injuries from occurring. Rosie will only be assessed as suitable to be a School Dog if she is seen to be gentle and loving with children at all times.

Within the next two weeks, Rosie will undergo her initial assessments before starting her school career. Rosie 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,

Alun Randell
Headteacher