



Longmeadow Primary School

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Further information and answers to any initial questions or concerns you may have :

What will the school dog do on a day-to day basis?

In the mornings, where possible (and once he is old enough), the dog will be around at the school gate with the Head before school to welcome children. All children will have the opportunity over time to have quality time with the dog and learn how to care for it. It will also be available to calm unsettled children, walk around the school on a lead with Mrs Howley / Mr Hetherington at appropriate times of the day so that it isn't a distraction to children's learning, and to go out on a lunchtime walk at the local park with a member of staff and small group of children. It will attend classes to support their learning where appropriate e.g. to writing instructions if learning about how to care for a pet etc. In the future, the dog will be trained to sit and listen to children read.

Safety around the dog

A risk assessment will be in place and available on the website.

The school will have additional insurance to cover having a school dog on site.

If the Head is at a meeting or off site for any reason, there will be a number of designated staff who have agreed to have responsibility to support the dog in her absence.

Children will only have contact with the dog with a supervised adult. When moving around the school, the dog will always be on a lead.

Children will receive training workshops, from the charity 'Dogs Helping Kids' before and when the dog is introduced into the school setting to teach them how to behave safely around a dog.

The dog will be based in the Head's office or in Mr Hetherington's Office and if an adult isn't in the room it will be safely in its crate.

There will be clear displays at the front entrance indicating the school has a school dog and signs around the school indicating where the dog is and if he is resting.

The dog will always wear an orange coat when training / working in the school.

What about the children who have allergies around a dog?

Research shows that simply washing their hands after working with a dog should help with allergies. Furthermore, research also shows that for children with allergies, simply standing back; keeping their distance and having limited contact with the dog will be sufficient. In a 7-year study looking a childhood asthma they were able to conclude that exposure to 2 or more dogs or cats in the first year of a child's life significantly lowered the probability of subsequent allergic reactions to common allergens. This exposure may help to reduce the risk of allergic disease develop during childhood.

Allergies are most prevalent when pet dander is present. The dog will be brushed, bathed and groomed regular, both at home by Mrs Howley and by a dog groomer. This will reduce the risk of allergens. Murphy will also be fed on a premium diet, as recommended by his breeder. This also reduces dander problems in dogs making them more hypoallergenic.

What about the children/staff who have a fear for dogs?

One of the aims of introducing a dog into the school is to reduce the number of children who have a fear for dogs by teaching them how to care and behave safely around them. If a child has a fear for dogs we will ask parents to inform us of this so that we can be aware and work with the parents / child with advice and support from the dog trainer / charity to build up their confidence so that they feel safe.

Health and well-being of the dog

The dog will receive all vaccinations, be wormed, groomed and cared for.

The Head (the owner of the dog) will have pet insurance to insure if it is ill the dog will receive immediate medical attention.

The dog will be registered with a local vet and receive regular checkups. The charity will also see the dog regularly to check and assess its training and provision by the school.

Possible Injury

Examples are biting and scratching. The correct socialization of any dog is essential. The school will work closely with both the breeder in the first instance and then the 'Dogs Helping Kids' charity to ensure correct socialization of Murphy.

Murphy will attend puppy training and then dog training once a week. He will also attend some 1:1 sessions to ensure a high level of training. He will also attend specialized training with the charity at their headquarters.

No children will have contact with the dog unless this is under the direct supervision of an adult.

All Dogs Helping Kids Dogs are highly trained, rigorously assessed and will only become certified school dogs if they are gentle and loving with children at all times.

Hygiene

There will be a designated area for the dog to be toilet trained which will be away from the children at the back of the school site. This will be in a gated, fenced off area that children will not be able to access. In the early stages of training if the dog was to have an accident this would be cleared up immediately by a member of staff who is happy to do so with suitable cleaning products. Children will never be asked to handle picking up 'poo' in a bag.

If children have stroked the dog, they will be taught to wash their hands afterwards.

What happens if the dog is ill?

If the dog were to be taken ill, it would not attend school and would be cared for at home until it was fit to return to school.

Please don't hesitate to contact school if you have any questions that have not been covered above. Thank you in advance for supporting us in introducing a school dog at Longmeadow. We are confident the children are going to love having Murphy as a member of our school community.