

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are writing to let you know of some exciting news for Daubeney School. Nova, our Federation dog will join Daubeney School every Friday (am) from Summer 1. Nova is a 5 month Cockapoo and has already spent a term at Sebright School supporting children.

Cockapoos are a breed of dog that are known for their mild temperament and he has a hypo-allergenic coat. Nova is our Forest School leader's dog and will be only coming into school for short sessions initially.

In an assembly we will discuss with the children the rules and expectations about having a school dog but we will also talk about many of the benefits too. We have undertaken a significant amount of research and are aware of many benefits to having a school dog including.

Benefits:

- 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.

Dogs are increasingly being used in schools with great success and some of you may have seen in the media that they are now being used in some hospitals as the emotional health benefits they bring are just so vast.

The dog's main place of residence will be the Nurture area, which is secure and separate from the classrooms. As Nova is still only young she will slowly be introduced to the school community and we will begin by introducing him to small numbers of children. Over the year all children will have the opportunity to interact with our school dog as she begins to visit more classrooms and moves around the school more. Whilst moving around the school, the dog will be kept on a short lead and will always be with an adult.

Please understand that we will do everything we can to reassure children who are fearful and that under no circumstances will they be forced to meet with the dog.

We have chosen a Cockapoo as an appropriate breed of dog for the school. The breed has been carefully selected because of its ideal temperament

We will publish pictures of our school dog, Nova, via our Twitter feeds so that everyone can enjoy his development and our Forest School page will provide regular updates.

We hope the children will gain a great deal of enjoyment from having their Forest School dog and that she becomes an established part of life at Lauriston Forest School. However, should you have any queries or questions on the matter then please do not hesitate to contact the school. In the meantime, please see the FAQs attached.

Yours sincerely

School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?

A. The legal owner of the dog will be Mrs Jenni Bird, who will care for the dog out of school hours and will bear the costs associated with it; the school budget will remain unaffected.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A. Yes. We have researched breeders and have chosen a reputable breeder

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A. Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A. The nominated member of staff will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its training.

Q. How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?

A. Nova will be taken on regular walks over Daubeney Fields. Our policy of no dogs in the playground is still applicable as we are unable to put effective control measures in place that guarantee temperament and safety when children come into unsupervised contact with unknown dogs.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A. As the puppy grows he will be walked mornings and lunchtime. The dog will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to water. We will work closely with other professionals to ensure the dog's welfare is always carefully considered.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs. The breed of dog has also been chosen for its hypoallergenic properties. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies.

Q My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?

A. Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have regular, close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. We hope to work

closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.