

Frequently Asked Questions ...

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

A: Mrs Ashfield is the legal owner of the dog, Reuben. It is her family pet and she will care for the Reuben out of school hours and will bear the costs associated with him; **the school budget remains totally unaffected.**

Q: Is the dog from reputable breeder?

A: Yes. Reuben is Kennel Club registered and the breeder is a Kennel Club Assured Breeder.

Q: Will the dog be a distraction?

A: Reuben will be kept in the office area. The office is separate from the classrooms/playground area to ensure he only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision. We will be careful to ensure that time spent with the Reuben is shared among the children fairly. We will also ensure that children who do not have permission for direct contact are still able to participate in a number of ways.

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: As the legal owner, Mrs Ashfield will be responsible for Reuben's training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained and over time Reuben will work towards a PAT PRO (Pets As Therapy) assessment.

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

A: In the interest of health and hygiene Reuben will be toileted and exercised in a sectioned off area of the school site where children have little or no access. Any 'deposits' will be picked up immediately, thus there will be no chance of children coming into contact with faeces.

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: Will the dog be allowed on the school playground?

A: The dog will not go onto the school playground when children are present. It will remain within school.

Q: How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A: Reuben will be allowed fresh air and exercise at regular intervals throughout the day. Parents will be able to give permission in advance to allow their child to be able to walk Reuben with Mrs Ashfield during these times, when appropriate. This will also be used as a reward. Reuben will have a 'safe place' to call his own in Mrs Ashfield's office and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors.

Reuben will be trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access water and be fed at appropriate times.

Reuben will not be in school everyday. There will be days, when the Headteacher's schedule dictates that she is not there as emotional support for Reuben. On these days he will stay at home and relax with Mr Ashfield and their other pets, Lolly, Harry and Tilly.

Q: How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A: Children will not need to touch the Reuben, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies. Please ensure that school is aware if your child has a pet fur allergy.

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

A: Access to Reuben will be carefully managed and supervised. Children do not need to have close contact with him 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.