

Our Ref: LPI/JRO/HT1830

25 March 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian

Boldon School has decided to have a new member of our school community – Trixie the Dog. The dog belongs to Miss Parker and she will be the main point of contact for any dog questions. She is also being supported by Miss Korn, our SENCO. Trixie is a Yorkipoo, chosen for her very friendly temperament and non-moulting coat. Trixie is a hypoallergenic dog.

We have undertaken a significant amount of research, have visited other schools who have a school dog established, and are aware of the many benefits to having a school dog;

- A calming effect on students, particularly those with behaviour or learning difficulties
- Encouraging expression and participation in more withdrawn students
- Fostering a sense of responsibility
- Increasing enthusiasm for and enjoyment of animals which will motivate students to think and learn
- Teaching students to nurture and respect life
- Helping work undertaken with the most vulnerable children and educational improvements with low achievers
- Helping students build confidence in reading
- Improving attendance

The breed of Yorkipoo is carefully selected as suitable for this type of environment. Trixie is well cared for and has had professional dog behaviour training. She is regularly groomed and bathed weekly. A copy of her vaccination record will be kept as part of the school's risk assessment. When she is in the building there will be a dedicated area where she will be kept and whenever Trixie is in contact with students she will always be escorted by a member of staff.

You will be able to see the school dog policy on the school website and there is a full risk assessment, which will be reviewed regularly. If at any point it comes to light that Trixie does not actively enjoy life in the school environment, she will no longer attend.

We hope that your child will benefit from having Trixie in school; however, it is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all students. If your child does not like dogs, there is no reason why he or she should come into contact with her. Any parent/carer who does not wish their child to interact with the dog is invited to write to Miss Parker/Miss Korn, via email or letter, to inform them of their wishes. Please also ensure your child's medical record is up-to-date. Permission for your child to have some contact with the dog will be presumed if no written communication is received by Thursday 28 March 2024.

If you do have any questions, or concerns then please do not hesitate to contact us. In the meantime, please see the FAQ attached.

Yours sincerely



Mrs L Pippin
Acting Head Teacher

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 is Miss Parker; she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog.

Q: Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A: Yes, a full risk assessment is in place, which will be reviewed regularly. We have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a dog.

Q: How will the dog go to the toilet to ensure hygiene for all?

A: The dog is fully toilet trained but in the interest of health and hygiene, she will be taken to an area of the school grounds that has no access to students during the school day- The staff in charge of the dog will ensure it is cleared away. Hygiene packs will be with the dog at all times and there will be cleaning products around school in case of emergency.

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

A: The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. The dog will have its own space in school where she will not be disturbed by students and will have unlimited access to food and water. The dog is well trained and training will be maintained outside of school. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is considered and remove the dog from the school environment if we don't feel it is happy.

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

A: Access to the dog will be carefully managed and supervised, children do not need to have close contact with the dog if this has been expressed by parents. We hope to work closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and help them to manage this.

Q: Will other dogs be allowed in school?

A: Allowing a dog onto the school site can only be approved by the Headteacher and for educational purposes. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Q: What breed is the dog?

A: Trixie is a Yorkipoo. The breed is hypoallergenic, known to be child friendly, lively and demonstrably affectionate yet sensitive.