

Frequently Asked Questions

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

A: The legal owner of the dog is Miss McColl who will care for the dog out of school hours and will bear the costs associated with it; the school will pay for any additional costs that may incur as a result of the dog being in school (for example, additional insurance and high level of training).

Q: Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A: Yes. We have done much research and have chosen a reputable breeder.

Q: Will the dog be a distraction?

A: The dog will be kept with Miss McColl when she is not working with children. She will only come 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 school dog is shared among the children fairly. We will also ensure that children who do not have permission for direct contact with the dog are still able to participate in a number of ways, should they wish to do so.

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. There is a School Dog Policy & Rationale along with the Risk Assessment available to view on our school website.

Q: Who is responsible for training?

A: Miss McColl is the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for her training.

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

A: In the interest of health and hygiene Margot will be toileted in an area of the school site where children have no access. Thus there will be no chance of the children coming into contact with faeces. Any accidents that happen will be cleaned immediately and in an appropriate and hygienic way. Any children in close vicinity to the dog will be removed while thorough cleaning takes place.

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

A: The dog will be exercised/walked at breaktime and/or lunchtime; parents will be able to give permission in advance to allow their child to be able to walk with a member of staff and the dog during that time. The dog has been 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: The breed of dog has been chosen for its hypoallergenic properties, however, children will not need to touch the dog which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions however small. 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.

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

A: Access to the dog will be carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have 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.

Q: My child must not be licked by the dog because of our religious beliefs. How will the school manage this?

A: Margot will be trained not to lick. However, we will try hard to ensure that the children do not come into contact with saliva, but if they do, we will contact parents of children for whom this will be an issue, as soon as possible to let them know that their child will need to wash before praying.