



Principal  
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Dear parents/carers,

We are delighted to tell you about the exciting addition to our Fairfield Family who is arriving this half term.

There is now considerable research regarding the therapeutic benefits of using dogs in education to support and nurture children. As a school, we have looked into this in careful detail with a view to having our own school dog and we have found the candidate we believe would be perfect for us. Her name is Dolly and she is a 3 year old neutered Cockapoo (a mix of cocker spaniel and poodle) who belongs to one of our teachers. Following trials in school last year, she has proved herself admirably and been accepted by the Trust. She was calm and content as she visited various classes and met children of all ages. She enjoyed interacting with everyone she met and her nature has been carefully assessed to ensure she will be able to suitably handle plenty of attention and enthusiasm.

Dolly will be used as a working dog in school and individual teachers will include her in lesson time as they felt was appropriate. Some of her key roles however will be to 'read' with children, support and nurture individuals and small groups of children, encourage a willingness to learn and promote growth mind-set in all of our children and to have a cohesive effect on our school as a key member of the Fairfield family.

As a school, we have enjoyed visits and workshops from the RSPCA on Canine Communication to ensure that children are aware of Dolly's needs and cues. This will ensure that both Dolly and the children are kept safe at all times and that the working relationship is positive and conducive to success. Some of our children will not have met Dolly yet, depending when they joined Fairfield, but she will be reintroduced to everyone during school assemblies and canine communication will be constantly reinforced and supported throughout school.

Attached is some relevant research to support dogs being used in school. We are keen to hear any feedback or thoughts you may have. Your children may already have told you about her trial visits and we would imagine the positivity we saw in school will have been conveyed to you already but if you require any more details, please do not hesitate to speak to your class teacher. If your child has any animal allergies please also let us know. Dolly does not moult so fur loss is minimal.

Dolly has a risk assessment that will be reviewed regularly. She also has a designated toilet area, which is not accessible to the children. Her working hours will be 2-3 days each week to ensure she does not become tired or overworked. She will have a quiet space of her own where she can rest regularly and if she shows any signs of tiring, sessions with children will be adjusted so that her well being and that of the children remains paramount.

We hope this will be a truly valuable experience for many years for all of us at Fairfield.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Sadler  
Principal