

# Summerswood Primary School

Furzehill Road  
Borehamwood  
Hertfordshire  
WD6 2DW  
Headteacher: Miss S Kneller

*'The Summerswood Pathway to success'*



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Facebook: Summerswood Primary School

June 2023

Dear Families,

We are excited to share with you that Summerswood have put the children's wishes into effect and we are able to share that we are trialing having our very own school dog.

Children from Summerswood's Parliament approached me to discuss having a school pet – they suggested a dog or an alpaca. Over past few months, we have undertaken a significant amount of research and are aware of many benefits to having a school dog, including:

- a calming effect on pupils
- improved behaviour and concentration, reduced stress and improved self-esteem
- encouraging expression and participation in more withdrawn children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
- teaching children to nurture and respect life
- helping work undertaken with the most vulnerable children, and educational Improvements for all children
- helping children build confidence by spending time with the dog.



Our school dog is undertaking training to work with children. The dog's main place of residence is in the school office area, which is secure and separate from the classrooms. The children will be able to interact with the dog under strict supervision at certain times of the week. The dog will not be given access to other visitors without supervision and mutual consent.

We will do everything we can to reassure children and adults who are fearful and under no circumstances will anyone be forced to interact with the dog. Whilst moving around the school, our dog will be kept on a short lead and will always be with an adult. We have chosen a Boxer Dog as this breed is good with children and adults alike.

Attached are a series of frequently asked questions which I hope will answer any queries you may have, but do come and ask Miss Kneller or Mrs Simpson if you have any other concerns or questions.

The "Dog in School" policy will shortly be available on our website. We hope the children will gain a great deal of enjoyment from having their school dog and that she becomes an established part of life at Summerswood Primary School very quickly.

Please return the slip below to the office. ***If we do not hear from you, we will assume you are happy for your children to meet our dog.***

Yours sincerely,



Miss Sarah Kneller

**Headteacher**

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### **School Dog Consent Slip – June 2023**

Name of child/family: .....

Class/es: .....

Please tick as appropriate:

☐ I am happy for my child to be involved with caring for the school dog, including supervised lunchtime walks around the school.

☐ My child is a little nervous of dogs but I am happy for him/her to be involved in caring for the school dog, including supervised lunchtime walks.

☐ My child is fearful of dogs but, in time, I would like them to work with the dog to develop their confidence with and understanding of dogs.

☐ I do not give permission for my child to come into direct contact with the dog.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

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## **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 Mrs Simpson, 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 Will the dog be a distraction?***

A. The dog will be kept in the central office area. This central office is separate from the classrooms/ playground area to ensure the dog 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 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, which will be available to view on the website.

### ***Q Who is responsible for training?***

A. Mrs Simpson is the legal owner of the dog and, as a result, will be responsible for her training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained.

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

A. In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog 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. 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. The dog will be walked at 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. This will also be used as a reward. The dog will be kept in the school office and 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. 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. Children do not need to have close contact with the dog 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.