

16th October, 2023
Ref: 000362



CHANGE OF SCHOOL DOG

Dear Parent / Carer,

We have successfully had a school dog for a number of years at St Chad's: Rosie Posie, Ms. Leach's miniature dachshund. Rosie Posie has been a much-loved member of our school family but, unfortunately due to health reasons, is no longer able to continue in her role as our school dog.

We are delighted to introduce a new school dog to our school community: Patch, a 5-year old, tri-colour beagle dog.



Patch belongs to our school's Welfare officer, Mrs Kay, and will accompany Mrs Kay in school as regularly as possible.

Beagles are a friendly and loving breed, known for being intelligent and they make popular family pets.

Patch has been well-cared for by Mrs Kay and is very calm, gentle and well-behaved. Since he was a puppy, he has grown-up and socialised around younger children (Mrs Kay and her husband have several young grandchildren).

Over the coming weeks, Patch will begin introductory visits to school so that he can get to know his new environment.

As was the case for Rosie Posie, a thorough risk assessment has been completed and has been quality assured by our Health and Safety Chartered Practitioner through DDAT. We have also revised and updated our school's Dog Policy. A copy of our policy can be viewed on our school [website](#).

As you know, declaring any allergies to dogs, as well as phobias to dogs, is requested as part of our induction meetings prior to your child starting school. If you do have any concerns about your child coming into contact with a dog in school then please speak to either Ms. Leach, Mrs Morley or Mrs Kay on the main school gate.

We have included answers to frequently asked questions at the end of this letter.

Since 2019, we have witnessed at first-hand the impact that Rosie Posie had to the children's well-being and learning. As Rosie Posie starts early retirement ☺, we look forward to welcoming Patch to this important role in school over the coming weeks.

Kind regards,

Ms. K Leach and Mrs. K Morley Co-Headteachers

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Headteacher: Ms. K Leach



Frequently-Asked Questions

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

The legal owner of the dog is Mrs Kay; she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog.

Will the dog be a distraction?

The dog will be kept in the Welfare Office and will only go to other parts of the school under the supervision of an adult.

Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

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. A school dog was introduced to St Chad's in 2019.

Will my child pick up infections from the dog?

The dog is fully vaccinated, treated regularly for worms and fleas and will be kept away from the school if it is ill. Children will be required to wash their hands before eating if they have been handling the dog. If the dog leaves a mess in the grounds it will be cleared by an adult and the area disinfected if necessary. No child will be asked to pick up dog mess.

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

In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks in the grounds. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed. Our policy of no dogs on the school premises 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.

How will the dog's welfare be considered?

The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. The dog will be kept in the Welfare Office and will only have supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog will be carefully trained over a period of time, including transition visits to school, and will have unlimited access to water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered. If he is showing signs of stress or anxiety he will be taken away from the situation and returned to Mrs Kay in the office.

How will this be managed where children have allergies?

Allergy information is obtained by parents/carers during our induction meetings to school. Children will not need to touch the dog which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. If a child is allergic to dogs then the dog will be kept well away. The dog will be regularly groomed to minimise any hair left in the school when moulting. The school already manages children with allergies and this will be no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs.

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

Dog phobia information is obtained by parents/carers during our induction meetings to school. Access to the dog will be carefully supervised and children do not need to have close contact with him unless they are happy to do so. We hope that seeing the dog over time and the non-threatening behaviour it exhibits, that a nervous child will gradually become more confident. 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.

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