

Headteacher: Mr John Kulyk

SEPT 2018

Dear Parents/Carers,

We have a school dog who is named Arlo and is owned by Mrs Appleby Payne, Deputy Head, who has full responsibility of his care, vaccinations, training and insurance.

He has been specially trained to work in school with children. He is currently just over 2 years old, has passed his Bronze and Silver Good Citizen Award and soon to take his Silver test. His training is weekly and ongoing. We are now working towards Gold.

After the success of our Pets as Therapy dog visits and further research we know that there are many benefits in having a school dog:

- 🐾 a calming effect on pupils, particularly those with behavioural or learning difficulties;
- 🐾 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- 🐾 encouraging expression and participation in more withdrawn children;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;
- 🐾 encourages respect and thereby improves pupils' relationships with each other, parents and teachers;
- 🐾 teaches children to nurture and respect life;
- 🐾 helps work undertaken with the most vulnerable children, and educational improvements with low achievers;

The dog will be available to work with children (and adults) who have had bad experiences with dogs or other animals. With parental permission, over a period of time children who react fearfully to dogs will be supported in approaching, handling and gaining confidence in managing their fear. While the dog's main place of residence will be an office area, which is secure and separate from the classrooms, children will be able to interact with the dog under strict supervision at certain times of the week as long as parental permission has been given. The dog will not be given access to other visitors without supervision and mutual consent. Please understand that we will do everything we can to reassure children who are fearful and that under no circumstances will they be forced to meet with the dog. Whilst moving around the school, the dog will be kept on a short lead and will always be with an adult.



Arlo joined school in September 2016 and for his sake and the sake of the pupils, he will be introduced slowly to each class. We have chosen an Australian Labradoodle as the most appropriate breed of dog for the school. The breed has been carefully selected because of its ideal temperament and because it is used widely in the field of therapy and support (e.g. hearing dogs). They have an excellent temperament, are easy to train and have non-shedding coats, this makes them hypoallergenic and suitable to use with allergy sufferers.

We hope the children will gain a great deal of enjoyment from having their school dog as he becomes an established part of life at Halesbury School.

We will publish pictures of our school dog, on the school website, on Arlo's Dog Blog.

We understand that it is not possible for all families to have a family dog and therefore we hope that this is an opportunity for children to have a 'share' in a dog and gain from a relationship and contact on a regular basis.

We would very much welcome queries or questions on the matter. In the meantime, please see the FAQs attached.

Yours sincerely,

**MR J KULYK – HEAD TEACHER
& MRS APPLEBY PAYNE - DEPUTY HEAD
HALESBURY SCHOOL**

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Name of child/family _____

Please sign as appropriate:

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

_____ Signature of Parent/Carer

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

_____ Signature of Parent/Carer

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.

_____ Signature of Parent/Carer



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 will be Mrs Appleby Payne who will care for the dog out of school hours and will bear the costs associated with it; the school budget will remain unaffected.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A. Yes. We have researched breeders and have chosen a reputable breeder who is based in Hereford and one of the main Australian Labradoodle breeders in the UK.

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

A. The dog will be kept in office areas. The office is separate from the classrooms/ playground area to ensure it 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, available to view on the Website.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A. The nominated member of staff will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its training. Appropriate professional training will be provided through his stages of development.

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

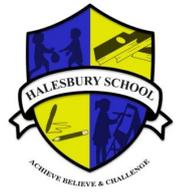
A. In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted in a sectioned-off area of the school site where children have no access. Thus there will be no chance of the children coming into contact with faeces.

Q Will the dog be allowed on the school playground?

A. The dog will only go on the school playground on a lead with an adult.

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 behaviour reward, in line with our behaviour policy. The dog will be kept in the Senior Leadership Offices 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. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs. The breed of dog has also been chosen for its hypoallergenic properties. He has a non-shedding coat and the breed was originally created to provide assistance dogs for people who have dog allergies. This should therefore reduce the likelihood of an allergic reaction, though this cannot be guaranteed. 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 is 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.