

SQUIRES AVENUE
BULWELL
NOTTINGHAM
NG6 8HG

EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL: CHRIS KEEN
ACTING HEAD OF SCHOOL: MATT IRONS

T +44 (0)115 964 7640
E enquiries@bulwellacademy.org.uk
www.bulwellacademy.org.uk



**THE BULWELL
ACADEMY**
*Creative
Education
Trust*

24th June 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

The Bulwell Academy School Dog

I am writing today to let you know that we have decided to take on a 'school dog' at The Bulwell Academy.

Why are we doing this?

1. Dogs teach children responsibility. Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give children a sense of importance and satisfaction that they can't get from school or other chores. The relationship that develops can be life-changing for a child and a great support system as they themselves continue to grow and develop.
2. Dogs teach children patience. Dogs do not always do as they are told first time!
3. Dogs teach children compassion. Just like humans, dogs feel emotion and pain. They are prone to injuries and the infirmities of age during their relatively short lives.
4. Dogs teach children about socialisation. Like most of us, dogs are social animals who enjoy and need attention and affection. By learning how to interact with a dog, children can learn how to better socialise with other children. If they can learn the social cues of a dog, then interacting with humans who can talk will be a walk in the park (pun intended).
5. Last, but certainly not least, dogs are a lot of fun. They greet you with a wagging tail every day and can cheer you up even on your worst day.

In addition to the 5 key reasons for our school dog joining us outlined above, we also believe he will improve the children's abilities within the school and help to improve and secure higher attendance levels.



Here is a picture of our school dog (yet to be named)



Many people have studied dogs in attempts to decipher their behaviour, and the theories abound. However, you just have to witness the interactions between dogs and children to realise the potential for greatness. Dogs can sense when children with epilepsy are about to have a seizure, they can sense when a diabetic child's sugar is low, and they can help children with severe physical disabilities find happiness in life. With the proper training and supervision, a dog can enrich a child's life. After all, dogs are basically four-legged children who never grow up!

Many schools use the services of a Therapy Dog who visits their school frequently. Due to the size of our school, and to allow as many children as possible to benefit, we have made the decision to have our own school dog.

As importantly, the dog will become part of our Bulwell family. We are working hard to make sure the academy is part of our community and the dog a member of our family.

Introduction

The Bulwell Academy Dog will be with our Director of English, Ms Carrick, who is very used to looking after this breed of dog. He is a very caring and well-behaved puppy who has the right temperament to become a real asset to The Bulwell Academy. His Mum is a KC Registered Boston Terrier and his Dad is a KC Registered Poodle. This makes him a Bossi-Poo. Mixed breed dogs have less health issues, and the inclusion of Poodle means he is hypoallergenic and will therefore have less impact on any allergies. He is a very intelligent puppy who is already mastering the basic commands of his training. He is both calm and confident and used to handling by young children.

He has public liability insurance; this means he can come into school. He regularly visits the vet for check-ups. Whilst he is there, they will administer worm and flea treatments as well as make adjustments to his food intake to ensure he remains a healthy weight.

Allergies

The puppy has been chosen for its non-shedding fur and hypoallergenic properties. This means that it is renowned to be suitable for most children that may have previous allergies to dogs. There will be specific work undertaken with the children who have been or are identified as having an allergy to dogs. This will only be done in communication with parents/carers and once permissions have been given beforehand.



Please ensure the school is always kept up-to-date with any details of allergies by informing: sarah.bearder@bulwellacademy.org.uk

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children, but that for many, it has the potential to provide positive benefits. Any parent/carer who has any concerns around their child having 1:1 contact with the school dog should write to: enquiries@bulwellacademy.org.uk

As the dog moves around school site, he will be kept on a short lead and children will always be able to keep a distance from the dog should they wish to do so. By introducing the dog to the school and the children at an early age, it is hoped that both the children and the dog can become familiar with, and therefore comfortable with, one another.

Introducing the dog into academy life

A gradual introduction process will take place. The puppy will spend time in school, getting used to the environment. At first, this will involve the puppy being walked around the school becoming used to his surroundings, and the children getting used to the puppy. The puppy will always be kept on a lead, unless in a controlled group activity as outlined in the risk assessment.

Naming of the dog

On 4 July, pupils in the academy will be asked to vote for the dog's name. They will be provided with options, promoted by pupils in the academy and during the day will be able to cast a vote. We want as many pupils as possible, and staff, involved in voting.

Training and Vaccinations

The puppy will undergo full training and will have temperament testing. After some time, the puppy will be trained as a Therapy Dog to work with our children. His vaccination programme records will be kept as part of the school's dog risk assessment.

We would welcome our parents/carers to come into school to meet the puppy, should you wish. We will host a coffee morning at the beginning of the academic year in September 2024, when you'll be able to meet the puppy.

If you have any additional questions regarding the school dog, please do look at the FAQs attached to this letter.

Regards,

Chris Keen
Executive Principal



School dog Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the owner of the dog?

The registered owner of the dog is The Bulwell Academy, but it will live with Ms Carrick.

Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

Yes. The dog has been purchased from a licensed and reputable breeder. Ms Carrick visited the puppies in their home with the mother. The puppy was specifically chosen for its temperament, friendly and confident.

Who will be responsible for its initial training?

Ms Carrick will be responsible for its initial puppy training and for its therapy dog training moving forward. Other named adults in school will also be involved in the delivery of this training.

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

There will be an area of the school grounds that is kept only for use by the dog for toileting purposes. The staff in charge of the dog will ensure to clean this away appropriately.

Which children will the dog work with?

The dog will work with children in scheduled sessions to support reading, confidence, and emotional regulation. The dog will visit children around the school site but will always be kept on a short lead. From time to time, there may be group sessions that will take place where the dog will be allowed off-lead in a controlled setting. Parents/carers will be notified if children are selected for an activity such as this. Much of the 1:1 work with children will not take place until the therapy dog training has been completed. Until then, children will not need to approach the dog should they wish to do so. Even once the training has been completed, children will not need to work with the dog, should they not wish to.

My child is allergic to dogs. How will you manage this?

Please ensure we are aware of your child's allergy on the email: enquiries@bulwellacademy.org.uk as soon as possible. We will contact you and work with you to ensure that we manage this closely. As mentioned above, we have chosen the dog breed carefully to ensure that it is as suitable for allergies as possible.

Does the dog have a Risk Assessment?

Yes, the dog has been fully risk assessed and this has been vetted by the Trust.