

# The Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School

[www.blessedsacrament.lancs.sch.uk](http://www.blessedsacrament.lancs.sch.uk)

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Headteacher: Miss K J Hannah BA(QTS)

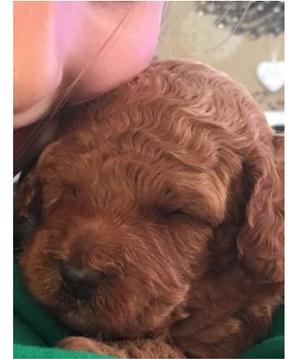


8<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Dear Parents / Carers,

You may be aware that there is a growing movement in many schools to reintroduce the concept of school dogs as a way of teaching all children responsibility and providing a source of pleasure and learning.

Research shows that many children who find reading practice difficult are more willing and able to read to the non-judgemental audience of an animal than they are to a human being. School dogs are similarly being used as a source of comfort and relaxation for children and adults who may need "someone to talk to" or just someone who will accept them and offer comfort or a calming influence in their lives. There is much evidence that children who struggle with relationships or with managing their own emotions gain a great deal from spending time with a pet.



With these ideas in mind, the governors have agreed to the concept of having a dog in school. I have recently bought a Labradoodle puppy. Labradoodle's are bred for their fabulously friendly temperament and I have met his mum, Treacle, who is a family pet with a lovely nature. I will bring the pup in to meet the children before summer and after the holidays, once he is used to the environment, he will begin to work with the children. Children will also attend assemblies and receive training about how to care and behave safely around dogs.

Obviously bringing any animal into school is not something to be approached lightly, both for the animal's sake and for the sake of the children and adults in the school. I have taken advice from Headteachers who have school dogs. We have discussed the practicalities, including everything from risk assessment and insurance to doggy toileting and children's allergies. I have also attended training to ensure that regulations are adhered to and I feel confident that we can successfully meet the needs of both the humans and dog in school. The Health & Safety officer from Lancashire County Council has been into school to write the risk assessment and approve the project.

We have shared this exciting news with the children. It is our aim that all children across the school will have opportunities to have contact and quality time with our dog. This new member of our staff team is called Buddy.

Whilst we are at a very early stage in this process of introduction, it would be helpful to know whether we have any children who are allergic to dogs' hair or who have a particular phobia concerning dogs. Buddy is a F1b Labradoodle and was selected for his non-shedding coat to minimise any allergies. We are very mindful that introducing a dog into the school setting should not be a distraction to the children's learning and for this to enhance our school ethos and the experiences we offer our children. A risk assessment will be available on our website before the dog arrives permanently in school, which will give you some indication of the amount of thought that has gone into this.

I would be very grateful therefore if you could let me know if your child has any relevant allergies or phobias, or if for any reason you would prefer them not to have contact with Buddy.

Yours Sincerely



Miss K J Hannah

Headteacher