

Headteacher: Mr Nick Hearn
 Deputy Headteacher: Miss Hayley Hughes

Monday 14th October

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to Disney



I am writing to inform you that we will have a new member of our school community from next month. We have decided to bring a dog into school as part of our on-going commitment to improving pupil and staff wellbeing and mental health.

Disney belongs to Emma who volunteers for a charity called Canine Concern. She owns the dog and is responsible for its care and wellbeing. As a school, we have taken out additional public liability insurance to ensure we are covered for the dog being on the premises. To being with, Disney will visit school for one afternoon a week. There will be a long period of integration into the school, with the children taught how to act near the dog, as well as the dog developing its understanding of school. Disney has been assessed by Canine Concern as being suitable to visit schools and interact with children. Lots of MK schools currently have dogs affiliated to the charity in their setting and they report very positive results. We plan to share information about Disney's time in school on our website and social media channels. There are many benefits of having a school dog, some are detailed below –

- A calming effect on pupils;
- Improved behaviour and concentration, reduced stress and improved self-esteem;
- Encouraging expression, participation and confidence for all children;
- Fostering a sense of responsibility;
- Motivating pupils to think and to learn;
- Developing an enthusiasm for and enjoyment of animals;
- Encouraging respect and thereby improving pupils' relationships with each other, parents and teachers;
- Teaching children to nurture and respect life;
- Helping work undertaken with the most vulnerable children;
- Helping children build confidence in reading;
- Improving attendance;
- Helping overcome a fear of dogs;
- Developing the understanding of unconditional love;
- Supporting with the development of cooperative play;
- Supporting children to develop empathy;
- Further promote our Wellbeing agenda for pupils.

How has the school planned for this?

- Rigorous research has been carried out;
- A full risk assessment and policy has been written and is available on the website;
- All contact will be carefully planned and children will not be left unsupervised with the dog;
- When not working, the dog will have a place to rest away from the children.

What about allergies?

- All areas of the school are vacuumed and surfaces are wiped down daily;
- Movement around the school will be controlled and the dog will primarily be based in one area;
- The dog will be regularly groomed;
- Any child working with the dog will thoroughly wash their hands after contact.

What if my child has a fear of dogs?

We are very aware that some children are scared of dogs. Often this stems from one bad experience or from a fear held by a family member which has passed to them. We are very keen to work with fearful children in a controlled way to try and help them overcome their fear should you wish this to happen. Equally, if you would rather your child does not have contact, you can indicate this on the form below.

In the future we may look to increase the amount of time that Disney is in school or to bring other dogs in. In either of these cases, the decision will always be carefully considered and risk assessed from the point of view of both the dog and the staff and children.

I know there will be lots of parents and carers who support the new addition to our school, however if there are any further questions please talk to a member of the Senior Leadership team or write to us in person.

Before any child is allowed to have contact with Disney, or any other dog, the form below must be returned to school.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Hearn
Headteacher

FAO Mr Hearn

Child's Name: _____

Class: _____

My child has a fear of dogs Yes No

If you answered yes to the question above...

My child has a fear but I would like the dog to support them in overcoming this fear Yes No

My child has an allergy to dog fur/hair Yes No

Bearing the above points in mind, I **do/no not*** give consent for my child to have contact with a dog in school.

(*delete as applicable)

Signed: _____ Date: _____