



Dear Parents/Carers,

We would like to introduce you to the newest member of the Birchgrove family, Daphne.

Daphne



- Daphne is an English Cocker spaniel puppy (show specimen).
- She was born on 1st February 2023.
- She has completed puppy classes and will begin her graduate classes with follow up training for becoming a fully working school dog.
- Daphne is from a reputable breeder where her bloodline is known for their kind, calm and friendly nature with some of the dogs going on to become hearing dogs for the deaf.
- Daphne loves cuddles and cwtches on the sofa as well as playing fetch in the garden, going on lovely long walks (although not too long) and eating!
- Currently, Daphne is very young and is still in her puppy stage. She is learning just like we do at school. She is full of love and just wants to make people happy.

Daphne attends school two days a week. Daphne's main places of residence will be in Mrs Jones' room and Mrs Miles' room which are secure and separate from the classrooms.

Daphne is Miss Lewis' dog. Daphne is first and foremost a family pet. All costs for food, vaccinations, grooming, medical treatments and responsibilities associated with the dog are met by Miss Lewis.

Daphne has been chosen carefully for her mild temperament and love of children. She will be introduced to school slowly and will not begin her 'working timetable' until she has met qualifications and is of a certain age.

Benefits of dogs in school:

- 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, as most children have a high level of natural interest in, 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;
- further promote and support our valuable wellbeing work with pupils and staff.

Dogs are increasingly being used in schools with great success and some of you may have seen in the media that they are now being used in some hospitals as the emotional health benefits they bring are just so vast. We have spent the last year researching and then planning how to appropriately introduce a dog into school life.

If your child is going to work in regular, close contact with the dog we will request permission from parents to do so. Over the year all children will have the opportunity to interact with our school dog as she begins to visit more classrooms and moves around the school more. Whilst moving around the school, the dog will be kept on a short lead and will always be with an adult.

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. If any further questions or queries need answering then please contact Miss Lewis.

We hope the children will gain a great deal of enjoyment from having a school dog. Further information that you might find helpful will be emailed out.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Lewis (Class teacher)

Mrs Morgan (Headteacher)

Permission slip for working with Daphne

Please tick as appropriate:

- I am happy for my child to be involved with all aspects of caring for the school dog.
- 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.
- I do not give permission for my child to come into direct contact with the dog.

Child's name:.....

Class:

Signed:.....

School Dog Information

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A. Yes. We have researched breeders carefully and Daphne comes from a reputable breeder.

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.

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 off school site by a named handler.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A. Daphne has been successfully toilet trained (mostly!) and will be given frequent opportunities for off-site walks. Daphne will only spend part of her time at school. Daphne will be kept in either Mrs Jones' or Mrs Miles 'room and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. She will have her own timetable which will not be changed on the days that she is in school. 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. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs. 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 regular, 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.