

Dear Families,

We have been looking into opportunities to increase the number of pets we have in school due to their therapeutic and calming nature.

Recently, our Head Pupils- Caydence and Sam presented me with some compelling arguments as to why Malpas Alport needs a school dog and I am in agreement!

In the coming weeks we will be welcoming Marcey- Mrs Taylor's dog, who has undergone Dog Emotional Support Training to support all children in school but especially those with social and emotional needs. She is a Miniature Daschound breed.

Pets in schools have been found to:

- Motivate pupils to learn and think.
- Encourage respect for life.
- Foster a sense of empathy and responsibility in children.
- Teach children how to nurture, care for and love all life.
- Lead to the development of hobbies and potential careers in animal care.
- Improve wellbeing and self-esteem.

And, we have teamed up with 'Pets as Therapy' and will be welcoming Marley and his owner into school to in the next couple of weeks to spend time in school and sit with children whilst they read. Marley is a elderly Springer Spaniel

Research shows that children can be nervous and stressed when reading to others. However, when a PAT Dog enters a group the child becomes less stressed, less self-conscious and more confident as the dogs are non-judgemental. Pets As Therapy Dogs provide comfort, encourage positive social behaviours, enhance self-esteem, motivate speech and inspire children to have fun.

As part of this, we will be teaching children dog safety to all children so they feel comfortable in school and when they approach a dog in the community.

We realise that many families have their own dogs but also there may be some children who have fears/ phobias, anxieties or allergies related to dogs and therefore we would like you to respond to this email by Friday 24th November if your child has needs linked to this, so that we can discuss and plan for and meet the needs of all children.

I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that all activities around the animals will be risk assessed carefully and the safety of pupils will remain our top priority at all times.

Many thanks for your support in this new venture,

Mrs Nic Wetton