



Headteacher: Mrs R Hughes

Bilford Road
Worcester
WR3 8QA

Phone: 01905 453348

Email: office@perdiswellpri.worcs.sch.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are very excited to introduce you to a new member of staff who we will be welcoming to Perdiswell Primary School!



Bracken is a registered Pets As Therapy, (PAT) dog and we are delighted to let you know that she will be visiting school on a regular basis. Bracken has been through a thorough temperament assessment along with her owner Mari Griffith-Edgell, who will accompany her at all times when she is in school. Below we have set out the benefits of a school dog, and tried to address concerns you may have.

What are the benefits of having a school dog?

Numerous research studies have shown the benefits of therapy dogs in schools. Therapy dogs have been working in schools for many years across the UK.

Evidence indicates that benefits include:

- Cognitive – companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem-solving and game-playing
- Social – a dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, wellbeing and focused interaction with others
- Emotional – a school dog improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. Dogs can also teach compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety.
- Physical – interaction with a furry friend reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, assists with pain management, gives motivation to move, walk and stimulates the senses

- Environmental – a dog in a school increases the sense of a family environment, with all of the above benefits continuing long after the school day is over.
- Reading – reading to dogs has been proven to help children develop literacy skills and build confidence, through both the calming effect the dog's presence has on children as well as the fact that a dog will listen to children read without being judgemental or critical. This comforting environment helps to nurture children's enthusiasm for reading and provides them with the confidence to read aloud.

Some concerns you might have:

My child is allergic to dogs:

It is understandable that some of you may be concerned about possible allergic reactions to a school dog. However, Bracken will be subjected to the most thorough cleanliness and grooming regime. She will also only be allowed in situations with pupils who voluntarily wish to work with her. Your permission will of course be sought in advance of Bracken having access to, and working with, your child in school. As part of PAT Dog regulations, dogs are flea and worm treated regularly.

My child is scared of dogs:

Some children may have had upsetting experiences have a fear of dogs (or another animal). Bracken will only be in contact with children whose parents have given their permission. However, Bracken's training will help her to be calm and gentle around children; she has very loving and gentle nature. Experience and research have shown that, with proper guidance and handling, children can learn to overcome their fear of animals and grow in respect and appreciation for them.

The school has a 'no dogs' policy:

Our school does have a 'no dogs' policy, however because Bracken is Pets As Therapy dog, specific rules will apply to him and him alone (please see our school dog policy, available on the school website). She will be on a lead at all times when in school and will always be accompanied by her owner, Mari. Bracken will also be fully insured to carry out her role, allowing her to be on the school site.

We hope you will join us in welcoming Bracken to the Perdiswell Primary School family and embrace all that she has to offer the school. A letter to seek your permission regarding contact with Bracken will be sent home at the appropriate time before contact occurs in a reading or therapy setting.

If you do have any questions regarding Bracken's visits, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Mrs Lucy Brooks
SENDCo