



**Aim High
Be Respectful
Create Happy Memories**

02.10.20

Dear Parents/Carers

We are writing to let you know some exciting news for Clayton Village Primary School. From January 2021 we will be welcoming Elvis, our school dog, who will be a regular attendee at CVPS.

Elvis was born on Friday 25th September on a farm in North Wales. He is a 1 week old black Labrador who will be coming to live with me when he is 8 weeks old. Labradors are a breed of dog that are known for their loving and loyal nature. This gives them the right temperament to be a school dog. Elvis will be coming into school for short sessions initially and I will be his handler whilst he is in school. I will be training him to become a school dog so he will, in time, become an integral part of our school family.

What are the benefits of a school dog?

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.

The school website and our school Twitter feed will publish pictures of Elvis as he grows up so that everyone can enjoy his development. We understand that it is not possible for all families to have a family dog and therefore we hope that this is an opportunity for children to have a "share" in a dog, gain from a relationship and contact on a regular basis and have a friend for life.

Clayton Village Primary School John Street, Clayton, Bradford BD14 6AD.

Telephone: 01274 414115 Fax: 01274 414116 Email: office@cvprimary.co.uk

Website: www.claytonvillageprimary.org.uk Headteacher: Miss R Cradock





We hope the children will gain a great deal of enjoyment from having their school dog and that he becomes an established part of life at CVPS. I will be visiting the classes so the children can find out a little bit more about Elvis including the first 8 weeks of his life and ask any questions they may have.

We hope you will join us in welcoming Elvis to the CVPS family and embrace all that he has to offer the school. A letter to seek your permission regarding contact with Elvis will be sent home at the appropriate time before his arrival in school. However, should you have any queries or questions on the matter then please do not hesitate to contact the school. In the meantime, please see the FAQs attached.

Yours Sincerely,

Miss R Cradock
Headteacher

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School Dog

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?

A. The legal owner of the dog will be Miss Cradock who will care for the dog out of school hours and will bear the costs associated with it; the school budget will remain unaffected.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A. Yes. We have researched breeders and have chosen a reputable breeder

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

A. The dog will be kept in the office area. We will be careful to ensure that time spent with the school dog is shared among the children fairly. We will also ensure that children who are not involved in regular, direct contact with the dog are still able to participate in a number of ways, should they wish to do so.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A. We have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog. There will be a School Dog Policy and Risk Assessment available to view on the website shortly.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A. The nominated member of staff will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained.

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 in a sectioned off area of the school site where children have no access. Thus there will be no chance of the children coming into contact with faeces. Our policy of no dogs in the playground is still applicable as we are unable to put effective control measures in place that guarantee temperament and safety when children come into unsupervised contact with unknown dogs.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A. Elvis will be extremely well looked after. He will live with Miss Cradock and her family. Elvis will be kept in the office area and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. Whilst Elvis is in school he will have access to the office area where he can relax during the day. This is where he will spend most of his time initially. Elvis will visit the vet regularly for all his injections as well as regular check-ups. If Elvis is unwell for any reason he will stay at home with a babysitter! He 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 that his welfare is always carefully considered.

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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. He will also only be allowed in situations with pupils who voluntarily wish to work with him. Your permission will of course be sought in advance of Elvis having access to, and working with, your child in school.

Q My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?

A. Elvis will be carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have regular, close contact with him 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. 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.

Q What if the dog becomes over excited and knocks my child over?

A. The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult. Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog. The dog will always be on a lead. We will have a risk assessment in place to deal with any situations that arise.

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