

Winhills Primary Academy

Part of The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust

Established in the Queen's Jubilee Year 2012

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Executive Headteacher: Mrs Susannah Connell BSc MA (Ed Mgt) NPQH
Head of School: Mr John Turner BSc PGCE

7th July 2023

Dear Parents or carers,

School Dog – Clark the Cockapoo

We are writing to let you know that the school, with full support from the staff and the Head Teacher, has decided to welcome Clark (a cockapoo dog) to Winhills Primary Academy from September. Mr Nelson is the owner of Clark and the dog has attended Great Staughton Primary Academy for the last five years.

Much research into having a school dog has been completed, with some benefits being:

- having a calming effect on pupils, particularly those with behavioural or learning difficulties;
- improved behaviour and concentration for pupils, reduced stress and improved self-esteem;
- encouraging expression and participation in more withdrawn children
- fostering a sense of responsibility
- motivating pupils to think and to learn, as 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, and educational improvements with low achievers.
- helping children build confidence in reading. Please see separate article in the link below:

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/feb/28/dogs-listen-to-children-reading>

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Our school dog (alongside Mr Nelson) has undertaken training with The Dog Trust and has also been assessed by a dog behaviourist. Clark has also worked with lots of children at Great Staughton Primary Academy. This has included those with special educational needs, some who have suffered bereavement, and even those who have been upset in some way and in need of calm, comfort and space before being able to tell an adult what has upset them.

The school dog will also be available to work with children (and adults) who have had bad experiences with dogs or other animals. With parental permission, over a period of time, children who react fearfully to dogs will be supported in approaching, handling and gaining confidence in managing their fear.

While Clark's main place of residence will be within the office area, which is secure and separate from the classrooms, children will be able to interact with the dog, under strict supervision, at certain times of the week. The dog will not be given access to other visitors without supervision and mutual consent.

We have chosen a Cockapoo as the most appropriate breed of dog for the school. This breed has been carefully selected because of the ideal temperament and because the hair is hypo allergenic. Cockapoos are also used successfully in other schools. Cockapoos are by nature gentle and friendly creatures. They are also superb working dogs.

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 and gain from a relationship with a pet and contact on a regular basis.

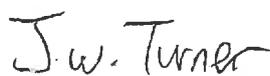
We hope that the children will get a great deal of enjoyment from having their school dog and that he becomes an established part of life at Winhills Primary Academy.

We would very much welcome queries or questions on the matter.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Nicola Harradine



Mr John Turner