



St. John's Church of England Middle School

Dear Parents/Guardians

School Dog

I am writing to let you know that St John's Middle School has decided to take on a school dog. The puppy belongs to Mrs Hine, Head of PE and she will be the main point of contact for any dog questions. The puppy will grow up in the school environment becoming fully accustomed to the routines of the day and supportive of students within the school.

We have undertaken a significant amount of research, have visited other schools who have a school dog established, and are aware of many benefits to having a school dog:

- A calming effect on pupils, particularly those with behavioural or learning difficulties;
- Encouraging expression and participation in more withdrawn children;
- Fostering a sense of responsibility;
- Increasing enthusiasm for and enjoyment of animals which will motivate the children to think and learn;
- 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;
- Improving attendance

The puppy lives with Mrs Hine and her family and will be introduced to the school environment and students gradually. The puppy is partaking in Kennel Club approved training and will have an annual temperament test. His vaccination programme records will be kept as part of the school's dog risk assessment.

The dog's main place of residence will be in Mrs Hine's office. Once he is 12 months old and has completed his Kennel Club training to a recommended level, the school dog could begin to spend time in the school library, The Launch Pad and with pastoral staff. Whilst moving around the school, the dog will be kept on a short lead and will always be with a member of staff.

You will be able to see the school dog policy on the school website and there is a full risk assessment, which will be reviewed regularly. If at any point it comes to light that the dog does not actively enjoy life in the school environment, then he will no longer attend.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but that for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent / carer who does not wish their child to interact with the dog is invited to write to Mrs Hine, via email or letter, to inform her of their wishes. Please also ensure your child's medical record is up-to-date and the school has been made aware of any allergies.

Permission for your child to have some contact with the school dog will be presumed if no written communication to Mrs Hine is received by Friday 20th November 2020. Contact email address: nhine@st-johns-bromsgrove.worcs.sch.uk

We hope students will gain a great deal of enjoyment from having a school dog and that he becomes an established part of life at St John's Middle School. Parents can follow Reggie's training and development on Instagram [@reggie_schooldog](https://www.instagram.com/reggie_schooldog).

In the meantime, please see the FAQs attached.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Elwell
Head of School

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 Mrs Hine; she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; the school budget will support insurance.

Q: Will the dog be from a reputable breeder? A: Yes. The dog was purchased from a reputable breeder. Mrs Hine visited the puppies in their home and both parents were seen. This puppy was specifically chosen for its temperament.

Q: Has a risk assessment been undertaken? A: Yes, a full risk assessment is in place, which will be reviewed regularly. 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: Who is responsible for training?

A: Mrs Hine will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its initial training.

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 taken to an area outside of the school grounds that has no access to students during the school day - The staff in charge of the dog will ensure that this is cleared away appropriately, leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

Q: How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A: The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. The dog will have its own space in Mrs Hine's office where it will not be disturbed by students. The dog will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to food and water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered and remove the dog from the school environment if we don't feel it is happy.

Q: How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A: Students will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for students 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. Any students with allergies to dogs will be built into the risk assessment as they are made known to the school.

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

A: Access to the dog will be carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it if this has been expressed by parents. 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.

Q: Will other school dogs be allowed in school? A: Allowing a dog onto the school site can only be approved by the Headteacher and for educational purposes. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Q: What type of dog is the puppy

A: Reggie, is Working Cocker Spaniel. This breed is known to be child friendly, lively, gentle mannered, demonstrably affectionate yet sensitive and have an outstanding trainability.

