

Newberries Primary School

Nellie & Fable (our School Dogs) - FAQs



	
Nellie	Fable

What are the benefits of a school dog?

Numerous research studies have shown the benefits of School dogs in schools. School dogs have been working in schools for years across the UK. However, they have been commonplace in schools in the USA and Australia for a lot longer. Evidence indicates that benefits include, but are not limited to:

Attendance - Children with low attendance or punctuality can be encouraged to come in by either providing an opportunity for the school dog to greet the child as they enter their classroom or by timetabling 'dog time' first time in the morning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in pupils.

Cognitive – companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem-solving and game-playing. Encouraging expression, participation and shared attention.

Social Development – a dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, wellbeing and focused interaction with others. By the children learning how to interact with a dog they can better learn how to socialise with other children, encouraging respect and thereby improving pupils' relationships with each other, parents and teachers.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-47655600>

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching pupils social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older pupils build self-esteem, learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility and boundaries.

	With a dog in school, pupils have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving students in the daily care of school dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. Emotional – a school dog improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. Dogs can also teach compassion as, just like humans, dogs feel pain and emotion. They also teach respect for other living things as well as patience, because dogs do not always do what they are told first time. Responsibility is also taught through teaching children about caring for animals, giving them a sense of importance and satisfaction that they may not get from other responsibilities. In addition to this, school dogs can relieve anxiety, improve behaviour, attendance and concentration as well as reduce stress and improve self-esteem Physical and Environmental – interaction with a furry friend reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, gives motivation to move and stimulates the senses. A dog in a school increases the sense of a family environment. Helping children build confidence in 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 judgement. This comforting environment helps to nurture children's enthusiasm for reading and provides them with the confidence to read aloud. http://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/feb/28/dogs-listen-to-children-reading Wellbeing - Dogs are fun and they greet you with a wagging tail every day, putting a smile on your face. The dog will bring much joy and support to all the pupils and staff who interact with her.. Pupils who struggle with social interaction will also find a reassuring friend in a dog.
Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?	The legal owner of Nellie is Ms Shekho and the legal owner of Fable is Miss Corbett., The legal owners will care for the dog when she is not at school and will bare the costs; the school will pay for additional costs for a dog being in school e.g. additional insurance and specialist level training
What is Nellie and Fables background?	They both come from a known breeder. Both parents and siblings have also been seen.
Will the dog be a distraction?	School dogs will be kept in the office areas away from the children and will only interact with children, with adult supervision, within timetabled times slots, which are shared carefully and fairly.
Has a risk assessment been undertaken?	Yes we have carefully considered the implications of having a dog in school and have sought advice from other schools who already successfully have a school dog. The school dog policy will be available on the school website.
Who is responsible for training?	The dog's legal owners are responsible for their dog's training. But the school will support any specialist training for being in school, which will be given by an appropriately trained professional.
How will the dog be toileted to ensure good hygiene is maintained?	School dogs will be toileted in an area of the school that the children will not have access to. If there are any accidents elsewhere, this will be immediately cleared up by an appropriate adult using an antibacterial cleaner.
Does this mean that dogs are now allowed onto school grounds?	Dogs, who are not service dogs e.g. guide dogs, or dogs other than the designated school dogs are not allowed onto school grounds. Nellie and Fable will be highly trained to work with children and a lot of control measures will have been put in place to ensure pupils are kept safe. Nellie and Fable have also received a 'temperament check' by a trained dog behaviourist. These procedures are not in place for other 'unknown' dogs.
How will the dog's welfare be considered?	The dog will be walked before coming into school and exercise walks will be taken around the perimeter of the school field-led by an adult throughout the day. The dog will be kept in the office areas and will only have supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog will be carefully trained over an extended period of time and will have unlimited access to water. We will work closely with veterinary professionals to ensure the dog's welfare is always carefully considered.

How will children have allergies be managed?	If parents and carers have informed the school that their child has allergies, these individual children will be assessed on a one to one basis for severity of reaction. Supportive Care Plans for anyone working with the school dogs (if this is their wish) will be organised so that time to interact will be in an open well ventilated space and gloves used for stroking etc. If any children have severe allergies and Parents request that no contact is made with the school dogs, this will be strongly adhered to and Nellie & Fable will not visit the classroom. Other pupils within the classrooms that the school dogs cannot visit, will be able to work with them in a different allocated space.
My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?	Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and no child will be made to have contact with her. If there are any children who are frightened but would like to try to work with Nellie & Fable, a programme of gentle introduction will be planned over an extended period of time.
My child must not be licked by the dog because of our religious beliefs. How will the school manage this?	School dogs will be encouraged not to lick. However, while they are puppies and being trained, we will try hard to ensure that the children do not come into contact with saliva. If a parent or carer has contacted the school to state that their child cannot be licked due to religious reasons, we will contact parents as soon as possible to let them know that their child will need to wash before praying.