



## MacIntyre Academies Quest Academy

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you would have recently read in our newsletter we will soon be welcoming our therapy reading dog Sydney to Quest. Sydney will be visiting us regularly and we are very much looking forward to him joining us. He is a Dachshund, also known as a sausage dog.

Dachshunds are a breed of dog that are known for their mild temperament and he has a hypo-allergenic coat. Sydney is my dog and he will be only coming into school for short sessions initially. I will obviously be caring for Sydney out of school and taking full responsibility of him, but other staff will be taking him for sessions.

We will discuss with the children the rules and expectations about having a school dog but we will also talk about many of the benefits too. We have undertaken a significant amount of research and are aware of many benefits to having a school dog including:

- a calming effect on pupils;
- improved behaviour and concentration, reduced stress and improved self-esteem;
- encouraging expression, participation and confidence for all children;
- fostering a sense of responsibility;
- motivating pupils to think and to learn, as most 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 children build confidence in reading;
- improving attendance;
- further promote our 'Well Being' agenda for pupils.

Dogs are increasingly being used in schools with great success and some of you may have seen in the media that they are now being used in some hospitals as the emotional health benefits they bring are just so vast.

Sydney's main place of residence will be my office, which is secure and separate from the classrooms. As he is still only young Sydney will slowly be introduced to the school community. If your child is going to work in regular, close contact the dog we will request permission from parents to do so. Over the year all children will have the opportunity to interact with Sydney as he begins to visit more classrooms and moves around the school more. Whilst moving around the school, Sydney will be kept on a short lead and will always be with an adult.

Putting children and families *first*



### QUEST ACADEMY

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Please understand that we will do everything we can to reassure children who are fearful and that under no circumstances will they be forced to meet with the dog.

We have chosen a Dachshund as an appropriate breed of dog for the school. The breed has been carefully selected because of its ideal temperament. We will publish pictures regularly, via our Twitter so that everyone can enjoy his development and our weekly newsletter will provide updates.

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

Nicola Wells

Principal



### School Dog

**This signed permission slip is required to allow your child to have contact with the school dog.**

**Is your child allergic to dogs? YES / NO (please delete accordingly)**

**I DO / DO NOT give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name) to have contact with the school dog (please delete accordingly)**

**Full name of Parent or Carer \_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature of Parent or Carer \_\_\_\_\_**

**Date signed \_\_\_\_\_**

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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 Nicola Wells 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 Will the dog be a distraction?**

A. The dog will be kept in an 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. Yes, 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 is also a School Dog Policy available to view on the Website.

**Q Who is responsible for training?**

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

**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.

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

A. As Sydney grows he will be walked, as required, by school staff. The dog will be kept in an Office area and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog will be carefully trained over a period of time. He will have unlimited access to water. We will work closely with other professionals to ensure the dog's welfare is always carefully considered.

**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. The breed of dog has also been chosen for its hypoallergenic properties. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies.

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

A. Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have regular, close contact with it 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.

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