 **Maylandsea Community Primary School**

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 Headteacher Mrs C James BA (Hons) Primary Education

***‘Enjoy and Achieve’***

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to let you know of some exciting news for Maylandsea Primary School. From after the October half term 2022 we will be getting our new school dog, called Dexter, who will be a regular attender at Maylandsea Primary School. Dexter is a 10 week old Cavapoo.

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

In an assembly 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.

**Benefits:**

* 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 work undertaken with the most vulnerable children;
* 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.

The dog’s main place of residence will be my office area, which is secure and separate from the classrooms. As Dexter is still only young he will slowly be introduced to the school community and we will begin by introducing him to small numbers of children. If your child is going to work in 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 our school dog as he begins to visit more classrooms and moves around the school more. Whilst moving around the school, the dog will be kept on a short lead and will always be with an adult.

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 Cavapoo as an appropriate breed of dog for the school. The breed has been carefully selected because of its ideal temperament

We will publish pictures of our school dog, Dexter, via our website and school dojo page so that everyone can enjoy his development and our weekly newsletter will provide regular updates.

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 Maylandsea Primary 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

 

Mrs C James

Head teacher