



Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School

Westway, Peterlee, Co. Durham SR8 1DE

Tel. 0191 5862264: Fax. 0191 5182537

Acting Executive Head Teacher: Mrs. M. Graham

olotr@durhamlearning.net www.ourladyrosary.org.uk

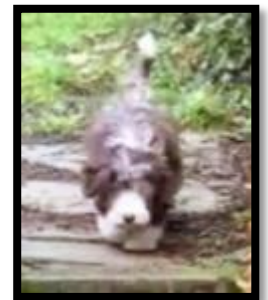


Dear Parents and Carers,

We have had some wonderful opportunities this week including an egg decorating competition, a fantastic Easter raffle and an amazing pantomime which was enjoyed by all. A HUGE thank you to everyone who contributed to the raffle prizes and who bought tickets. We have raised an amazing £400 towards school funds which will be used to benefit all the pupils in school. We have also celebrated Holy Week with some special prayers, acts of worship and time to reflect.



Over recent years there has been a growing interest in the role of animals, in particular dogs, in the school environment and the children have expressed their desire for this to be the case. We have given a lot of thought to this idea and are delighted to say we are fulfilling the wishes of our children.



We have spent much time deliberating and researched into the benefits of a dog. Findings have shown this will support children's reading, anxieties, well-being and behaviour. In our current climate, there is an added emphasis on well-being and mental health. Reading recent research has brought to the forefront the mental health of our children and it made us more aware of their well-being and the benefits a dog could bring to many. Children can develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with pets as well as experiencing great enjoyment from interactions with dogs and puppies.

Research has shown that **reasons to have a school dog** include;

Social Development: Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching pupils' social skills and responsibility. A school dog may sometimes work with pupils on a one to one basis and can especially help those who have suffered trauma or been through difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs.

Well-being: Children can have emotional and mental health benefits from having a school dog. Children will increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with pets. The last survey, conducted in 2004, found that 1 in 10 children aged 5-15 had a mental health disorder (either emotional, behavioural, hyperactive, or other). In 2018 figures, this had risen to 1 in 8. A dog can lift moods in the school and would be there to offer friendship and a shoulder to lean on for some pupils with social difficulties. (See <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/blog/what-new-statistics-show-about-childrens-mental-health-for-statistics>)

Reading: Reading to dogs has been proven to be extremely beneficial. Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared or inhibited to read to a dog. Research has proved that pupils who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in intra and interpersonal skills among the peers they mix with.

Behaviour: Sometimes behaviour problems do occur in school and these may interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in pupils. The study showed pupil behaviour improved toward teachers and children also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents reported that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog at school.

Worries about having a school dog

We know that some children might be scared of a dog in case it bites or licks, or people might have had a bad experience with a dog. We know that an adult will always be with the dog, no dog will ever be wandering around the school unsupervised and that no one will have to spend any time with the dog if they did not want to. All parents have the right to request that their child does not have contact with a school dog. We hope that a school dog will help everyone to overcome their worries and fears. We know that the children will have to be calm and sensible around the dog so that the dog does not get frightened too. After any contact with a school dog, all children will always wash their hands properly and the school dog would not be allowed to lick anyone's faces.

We understand that some families may have concerns about having a dog in school and would like to reassure everyone that we have a policy and full risk assessments available for anyone who would like to get further information. Mrs Graham and Mrs Sutherland are also available to discuss this and talk to anyone about how it works in school.

Other School News!

School Lunches

Today we say goodbye to our amazing cook, Lisa. After serving gorgeous meals this half term Lisa has secured her own kitchen in a school in South Shields which is closer to her home. We are sad to see you go Lisa but wish you well in your new school!

We look forward to the dishes our new cook David, who has been working alongside Lisa for the last few weeks, and the team are planning to serve the staff and children.

Contact tracing over the Easter holidays

To support the NHS Test and Trace process, we ask that staff, students, parents and carers inform Mrs Sutherland of a positive case if either symptoms or a positive home LFD test occurred within 2 days of them being at school. Please email her on c.sutherland100@durhamlearning.net with details of the positive case, if/when symptoms occurred and the date of the positive test. Thank you for your support with this.

Dates for the Diary

Holiday	Closing Date	Re-opening Date
Easter	Thursday 1st April 2021	Monday 19th April 2021
May Day Bank Holiday	Friday 30th April 2021	Tuesday 4th May 2021
Summer Half term	Friday 28th May 2021	Monday 7th June 2021
Summer	Thursday 22 nd July 2021	Tuesday 7 th September 2021

**School will be closed for two further Professional Development days this school year:
Friday 2nd July and Friday 23rd July 2021**

I hope that you all have a wonderful Easter holiday and the weather stays kind so that some outdoor gatherings can go ahead. Please stay safe and I look forward to seeing you for our summer term.

Kind regards,

Mrs M Graham

Acting Executive Headteacher

School Dog Response:

No response indicates that you give consent for your child/ren to be in contact with a school dog.

You do not need to contact school.

Please respond by email to inform us of any of the following:

- I do not want my child to come into direct contact with a school dog.
- My child has allergies.

Please email: olotr@durhamlearning.net