



November 2023

Dear Parents & Carers,

I am writing to introduce you to our newest staff member, who will be joining us at Havannah Primary every Wednesday afternoon. Koda is a Saint Berdoodle. Koda has recently trained as a Pets as Therapy dog, which is a registered charity (please follow link for more information on this <https://petsastherapy.org/>) and will be volunteering with us. We wanted to share some information about the benefits of having a therapy dog in school as well as answer some potential questions and explore some concerns you may have:

Benefits of Having a Therapy Dog in Schools:

- Increased self-esteem and positive interactions between staff and students.
- Decreased blood pressure and increased physical stimulation.
- Increased memory and problem solving skills.
- Increase in positive mood; places students at ease and increases openness/socialization with others.
- Studies have shown an Increase in student reading skills when they are given opportunities to read to an accepting, non-judgemental audience ie. a therapy dog.

Concerns and Considerations:

- Koda has a non-shedding hypoallergenic coat, which is suitable for pupils with allergies.
- Koda will only interact with students who want to work with him. This is to be mindful of pupils that may not like dogs or have a fear of them. Research has shown that work with therapy dogs often decreases one's fear of animals.
- Koda will be on a lead and wear a collar when he is on school grounds; he will not be free to roam.



- Koda lives with a family on a full-time basis. He is up to date on vaccination records, registered with the town, visits another school and a hospital on an ongoing basis and is groomed regularly.
- Koda will have access to food, water and be given multiple opportunities to be brought outside for bathroom breaks during the day. In addition, Koda and his owner will usually be working in a quiet spot in school, where the pupils (and a member of staff) will be supervised.
- Koda will be slowly acclimated to the school environment by working 121 with the Key Stage 2 children to begin with and then filter through the school as he becomes more relaxed with his job.

We are extremely excited to welcome Koda to the Havannah Team and believe that his influence will be a positive one for staff and students. The plan is to start allowing the Key Stage 2 children to read to him first and then the younger children as he becomes more confident. We will then also allow Koda to spend some nurture time with the children and even reward time if the children would like to.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me directly at holmes@havannah.cheshire.sch.uk.

If you would like your child NOT to spend time with Koda and opt out then please let me know at holmes@havannah.cheshire.sch.uk otherwise, we will assume you are happy for your child to visit Koda.

Thank you for your continued support with this amazing opportunity.

Ms Holmes
SENCO

