



Mrs Lesley Hughes  
Headteacher

With God, all things are possible.

**ST. MARGARET'S ANFIELD CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
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21<sup>st</sup> October 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

**Re: Introducing SKYE - our School Therapy/PAT Dog**

I am delighted to share the news that we are now lucky enough to introduce our school dog Skye, a lovely cross breed, who lives with our strategic school business manager, Ms Whitfield and her family in their home. This is an initiative that many schools, both locally and nationally are currently enjoying.

**Safety**

Skye has been checked through assessment by an accredited dog behaviour specialist to say that she has an impeccable temperament and is competent and safe to work in the school environment. Skye is a lovely, calm, kind and even tempered dog who is also trusting and gentle. She enjoys being around people. A policy and a thorough risk assessment are in place and incorporate all advice from Paws in Nature, trained dog handlers. Skye will have nominated staff who will be effectively trained in handling her and also in 'Dog Code Canine Safety'. This means she will always be on a lead whilst walking around our school, indoors and outdoors. She will be introduced to the children very gradually with the trained dog handler/s who will teach the children the 'Dog Code Canine Safety' which educates all of the SMA family how to behave safely and positively around Skye.

**Insurance**

We have public liability insurance for Skye following on from the approved risk assessment. This insurance is specific for Skye and does not include public dogs. This means any other dogs including dogs belonging to children, parents/carers and members of the public are still not allowed to be on site.

**Reading and Literacy**

Many children are naturally comfortable in the presence of dogs, and it has been proven that the special relationship that PAT dogs have with children enhances literacy skills and encourages reading in a relaxed environment, with the dog and child sitting together. The dog acts as a non-judgemental listener and offers comfort to the child who may find reading difficult or stressful, which helps the children grow in confidence. There are around 6000 children across the country who benefit each week from this unique experience.

**Well Being and Therapy**

It is also proven that petting an animal has a therapeutic and calming effect on all of us and helps to **decrease levels of stress and anxiety** in our bodies.

Please complete the slip overleaf to let us know if your child is allergic to dogs or fearful of dogs at all and return to school by Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Hughes  
Headteacher



I would like to inform you that my child .....in Class.....

DOES have a dog allergy.

Is a little fearful of dogs.

Info

Signed .....Parent/Carer.      Date.....



Truth - Fairness - Justice - Joy