

Updated 06/10/2020

Read2Dogs, Nurture & Wellbeing & Virtual Visits

Benefits of Pets As Therapy dogs in school

Pets As Therapy offer three styles of visit, the Read2Dogs Scheme, Nurture & Wellbeing and Virtual visits, all are valuable interventions and can be used to support pupils facing many different challenges.

All children benefit from these interventions, including reluctant readers, those with special educational needs e.g. autistic spectrum disorder, selective mutism, learning difficulties, emotional and social difficulties, speech, language and communication difficulties.

Our Read2Dogs Scheme and Nurture & Wellbeing visits have been offered nationally since 2011. On average over 6000 children per week across the country benefit from this unique experience, and the results are outstanding. Virtual visits are new and have been developed to support schools and volunteers during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Many children seem naturally comfortable in the presence of dogs. Schools can use this special relationship to enhance the sense of well-being of a pupil. This contact between dog and pupil encourages physical interaction which helps to put the pupil at ease. The dog acts as a non-judgemental listener and offers to comfort the pupil who may find school challenging or stressful.

How it works

- The overall management of the Pets As Therapy visits whether physical or virtual, is the responsibility of the school.
- A member of staff **must** be present for the duration of each session, this can be 1-2 hours. (This also applies if the volunteer is a member of your staff).
- Parental consent **must** be obtained.
- Weekly sessions are recommended.
- A quiet room is essential, preferably with external access so that the dog does not need to walk through the school and can easily exit should the need arise.
- The school should provide comfortable seating.
- The end of the week may be better for sessions, the pupils will look forward to their sessions and teachers could use it to motivate them throughout the week.
- Bookmarks and certificates of achievement can be provided upon request.



our pets and people enriching lives,
one visit at a time

The Benefits

The effects of Pets As Therapy dogs in schools has shown a range of benefits including:

- Reducing stress physiologically (Cortisol levels) and increase attachment responses that trigger Oxytocin – a hormone that increases trust in humans.
- Increase in school attendance.
- Gains in confidence.
- Decreases in learner anxiety behaviours resulting in improved learning outcomes, such as increases in reading and writing levels.
- Positive changes towards learning and improved motivation.
- Enhanced relationships with peers and teachers.
- Teaching empathy and appropriate interpersonal skills.
- Development of social skills.

Insurance

Pets As Therapy carries public liability insurance with an indemnity limit of £10,000,000. If you require a copy of the insurance certificate, please contact Head Office.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

All volunteers are registered with Pets As Therapy and have been reference checked. Pets As Therapy does not carry out DBS, this is left to the discretion of the individual establishment and is highly recommended.

Cost

There is no cost for our services, however we do rely solely on donations and fundraising.

Please contact our **School Co-Ordinator, Ann Taylor** ataylor@petsastherapy.org 01865 671440 for more information.