

What are we aiming for?

Eventually, we would like Albie to be so well trained that he can pass the assessment to become a Therapy Dog. This means that he would have been assessed to be a calm and helpful enough to help children with elements of school such as reading and play. This can't happen until he is at least 1 year old. We also want to train Albie as a reading dog.

Training

We have introduced Albie as a puppy so that we can train him to be around children and noise. We will introduce him slowly as he is only a puppy and will display puppy behavior. We will be getting a professional dog trainer to come into school for a few sessions to help us make sure that Albie learns some important skills and tricks as he learns how to become a good school dog. We will also be taking him to obedience classes outside of school.

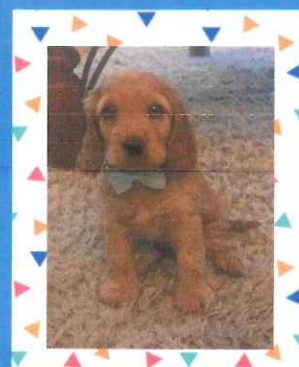
Rules

The children will be taught how to treat the puppy/dog with kindness and understanding and how to be gentle with him. **The children will be taught the following rules**

- He is not a toy
- We must always be gentle with the puppy
- There will be no rough handling or rough play
- Stay out of the puppy's bed/crate
- Do not disturb him when he is asleep
- Do not bother him when he is eating food
- No shouting or screaming
- We must NEVER hit the dog, no matter what!



ALBIE, OUR SCHOOL PUPPY



Over the summer term, Albie, the Show Cocker Spaniel will be coming to join St Albert's. He will be going home each evening with Mrs McEvoy and we will be spending the first half of the summer term learning lots of new things so that he is ready to come into school after the half term. Albie will have lots to learn and the children and staff will need to be really patient as he learns what is expected of him in school.

What are the benefits of a school dog?

The presence of the dog in the classroom, around the school and in the staff room will have a beneficial effect on both students and staff and will support with the social and emotional well-being of the school community.

10 benefits

1. There will be a range of learning activities across the school and the puppy/dog will provide a innovative and thought provoking subject matter. There will be many literacy activities and opportunities to write and there will also be a range of individual benefits for students from helping children to build confidence in reading (ie Reluctant readers being encouraged to read aloud to Albie) to road safety to personal hygiene.
2. Members of the school will have a 'shared interest'. This encourages everyone to communicate, which has a positive impact on communication and relationships around the school as a whole.
3. A sense of responsibility will be fostered.
4. It will have a calming effect on pupils, particularly those with behavioural or learning difficulties. Whenever the children are sad or upset they will be able to seek a doggy cuddle and hopefully feel better.
5. It helps promote positive behaviour, improved attendance and helps improve self-esteem.

6. A school dog will help to motivate pupils to think and learn and children will be motivated to work hard.
7. A school dog encourages expression and participation in more withdrawn children.
8. Having a school dog will encourage enthusiasm for, and enjoyment of, animals (i.e. an increased knowledge of dogs and how to behave safely and appropriately around them). By teaching children to nurture and respect life, children gain a better understanding of how to take responsibility for another living being. This, potentially, gives them better recognition of their own responsibilities.
9. It will encourage respect and thereby improve pupils relationships with each other, parents and teachers. There will be improvements in the way students interact with each other and with members of staff.
10. Younger students will have greater access to the community with a school dog. For example, the presence of the dog can give them the confidence to go out on short trips outside their school.

What is a Show Cocker Spaniel like?

A Cocker Spaniel's temperament is very gentle and loving and Cocker Spaniels are happy, friendly biddable dogs.

They are willing, intelligent and easy to train and it is this trainability that helps them become good family dogs.

They love being out-doors but are equally happy inside; languishing on a rug or curled up on a lap, playing with children or simply dozing in their bed.

If a Cocker Spaniel is treated with kindness and understanding he will reward you with years of affection, companionship and happiness.

There are many different types of Cocker Spaniel but it is believed that the Show Cocker Spaniel have calmer dispositions.

How will the school plan for a puppy?

We have sought advice for our local Health and Safety Officer who has experience of working beside a dog in a local school. A full risk assessment has been carried out and specific insurance has been obtained for a dog on the school premises. All contact with the children will be carefully planned and the children will not be left unsupervised with Albie. When not working, Albie will be

based in one of the school offices or in a 'Time Out' space where he can rest and enjoy some down time.

What about allergies?

- ❖ All areas of the school are vacuumed and surfaces are wiped down daily
- ❖ Any child working with the dog will wash their hands or use anti bac gel
- ❖ A full management plan will be introduced regarding problems arising from allergies.
- ❖ Albie will be frequently groomed and all bedding will be washed regularly to minimize the effect of allergens.

Do other schools have dogs?

Dogs are increasingly popular in many schools and the children in St Albert's have been asking for a school dog for a while now. Many of our local schools have a dog including Hope Primary (Dexter), St Margaret Mary's (Rosie), Knowsley Lane and Knowsley Central. Ofsted and the LA have praised the introduction of the school dog and have acknowledged the benefits in very recent inspections. School staff have visited other schools to seek advice and to see how their dogs work in school.

How will we know what he is doing?

We will set up a school dog blog and this will be updated regularly to show you how Albie is settling into school and the kind of activities he has carried out. The children will take an active role in this.

Initially we will spend time introducing the puppy to the school environment and making sure that from a young age he is socialized, familiar with the environment and introduced to the noises and smells of school.

He will join us for the daily mile when our pathway is sorted, work with the learning mentors and Miss Jones, he will spend time in classroom visits, sometimes go out to play and be trained to help us with our reading and emotional wellbeing.

Once settled and coming into school more regularly, we will also display Albie's timetable each week so everyone knows what he is up to and when he is in school.

When he is not working Albie will be based in one of the school offices – his Time out space where he can rest and enjoy some down time.