



Leverstock Green CE (VC) Primary School

Striving for excellence; caring for the individual.

Green Lane
Hemel Hempstead
Herts
HP2 4SA

11th November 2021

Dear Parents,

School Dog

The children (and staff) are missing Bertie dreadfully. Following consultation with the Governing Body, my dog, Fido, is going to replace him on a part-time basis. Fido is actually Bertie's half-brother so hopefully he will be able to fill those big boots quite naturally. He is 22 months old and very well socialised.

I will spend some time in each class with Fido, so that all of the children who are confident and want to be involved with him have the opportunity to say hello. He also needs to get used to the noises and business of school. I will be with Fido on the playground at the start and the end of the day for parents to meet him.

Cockapoos are hypoallergenic and shed very little so this shouldn't be a big problem for children with allergies. They are intelligent, outgoing, loving, gentle, have a fantastic temperament and are small, not intimidating.

School dogs have become increasingly popular in the recent years and this is due to the fact that extensive research has shown that dogs can offer vast amount of benefits to children. In time and through on-going training, Fido will:

- assist with learning through unique opportunities for motivation and participation
- increase children's confidence of, and enjoyment in reading
- help raise children's self-esteem and build confidence
- help develop children's respect, responsibility and empathy
- support positive behaviour and reduce any anxiety
- provide comfort and consolation to those in need of emotional support and companionship to all
- improve overall wellbeing and have a positive impact in school

Fido's main place of residence will be my office, which is secure and separate from the classrooms. Children will learn the principles of good pet ownership and will be taught how to approach and handle dogs safely and responsibly; we will follow the rules we learnt with Bertie to ensure that everyone feels safe. Anyone in contact with Fido will be reminded to wash their hands after working with him.

The children really enjoyed having a dog in school and are keen to have another. There are enormous benefits to having a dog on-site; he will bring a lot of joy to the children (and staff!) and help them develop their sense of responsibility, empathy skills and enjoyment of school. With parental permission, over a period of time children who react fearfully to dogs are supported in approaching, handling and gaining confidence in managing their fear. A comprehensive risk assessment has been completed and is available upon request. His first blog is on our website:

<https://www.leverstockgreen.herts.sch.uk/fidos-dog-blog/>

Children are not able to interact with Fido without a completed permission form. We are trying to save trees so we have created a Microsoft form to use instead. Just click on the link, select your answers and click submit to return the form as soon as possible. If you have any questions, or need a paper copy, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me. <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=zol8l0ACaUq1GCnFgaeFwzMEub6c9v9BnVXsdysph8lUNkdDU1NJSzVSTIRNQiIRME5KOVIMSjdVQS4u>

Please note that Hertfordshire County Council have made an exception for school dogs; any other dogs remain prohibited from the school grounds.

Mrs Burgess
Headteacher