



St Martin's Garden
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Head Teacher: Mrs C Parfitt

Lympsham Green, Odd Down,
Bath, Somerset. BA2 2UN

T: 01225 832 112

E: School@stmartinsgarden.org.uk

W: www.stmartinsgarden.org.uk

School Dog at St Martin's Garden Primary School

Dear Parents and Carers,

You may be aware that there are many schools that are reintroducing school pets as a way of teaching all children responsibility and providing a source of pleasure and learning. Of particular interest is the move towards 'Reading Dogs' and 'Therapy Dogs'. The former is based on research which shows that many children who find reading practice difficult are more willing and able to read to the audience of an animal than they are to a human! Therapy dogs are similarly being used as a source of comfort and relaxation for children and adults who may need 'someone to talk to', or just someone who will accept them and offer comfort or a calming influence in their lives. There is much evidence that children who struggle with managing their own emotions also gain a great deal from spending time with a pet.

With these in mind, the governors have agreed to us having a dog in school. Over the year I have been researching and speaking to other schools about the benefits of having a dog in school. As such, **Buddy the Border Collie puppy** will be joining us.

From September, the puppy will be coming into school, slowly having been introduced to the school environment during the summer. His home will be the school offices. He will be attending puppy training and will hopefully progress to reading training as he get older. We will gradually introduce him to the children who will learn how to care for him.



Obviously, bringing any animal into school is not something to be approached lightly, both for the animal's sake and all of the people around it. As well as visiting other schools, we have spoken to several other schools that have a well-established school dog, considered the practicalities, from risk assessments to insurance to training, toileting and allergies.

It is our aim that children across the school will have the opportunity to get to know Buddy and spend time with our dog in due course, however, in order for his introduction to be as successful as possible, this is a long process.

It would be helpful to know whether we have any children who have allergies to dogs' hair or who have a particular phobia concerning dogs. Your children's interaction with our school dog will be entirely optional. If your child does not want to spend any time with our dog they will not have to. I



can assure you that our dog will not be around the school off the lead and will only have access to certain areas.

We are very mindful that introducing a dog to a school setting should not be a distraction to the children's learning and it should enhance our school ethos and the experiences we offer, therefore the children will have opportunities to see him at breaks and lunchtimes and should they wish to visit him to share their learning.

We are looking forward to welcoming our newest team member to St Martin's Garden after the summer. Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Claire Parfitt

St Martin's Garden Primary School Dog

Name of Child: Class:.....

Please tick the appropriate statement and ONLY return if applicable:

My child is allergic to dogs and I would prefer them not to be in contact with the school dog.

My child is allergic to dogs; I am happy for them to be in the same room but not touch the dog.

My child has a fear of dogs and I would prefer them not to meet the dog.

My child has a fear of dogs and I would like them to slowly to be introduced to the dog in time to overcome their fear.

Signed:..... Date:.....