

FAQ's for students / parents and carers

General queries about a school dog

Q. What breed are the school dogs and what are they called?

A. There will be two dogs able to attend the school site and be part of the learning day with students, they are Oscar (Black Labrador), owned by Claire Andrew and Archie (Golden Labrador), owned by Keith Browell.

Both dogs are Labradors and have been chosen because of the intelligence of the breed, because they respond well to training and because they are known to be good with students, being very sociable and friendly. Both individual animals are from reputable breeders and have a positive temperament. They have received suitable training and will have time for acclimatisation to allow them to feel comfortable and relaxed in the school environment before working with students.

Q. Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A. Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog. Claire Andrew and Keith Browell have produced a risk assessment which has been approved by the Senior Leadership Team and this will be reviewed annually. The Risk Assessment can be seen [here](#).

Q. What will Archie and Oscar be doing in school?

A There are several different roles that we foresee Archie and Oscar fulfilling.

- Firstly, being a general presence within school and being able to interact with student groups in lessons, providing a positive and therapeutic type experience. Increasing positive behaviours and engagement.
- Working 1:1 with students as a motivator or positive engagement factor for learning activities.
- Supporting specific lessons and learning about pet care, responsibilities with animal care and care of dogs.
- Providing reading practice opportunities for students developing their literacy skills.

Q. Are the dogs from a reputable breeder?

A. Yes. Both individual animals are from reputable breeders and have a positive temperament. They have received suitable training and will have time for acclimatisation to allow them to feel comfortable and relaxed in the school environment before working with students.

Q. Will the dogs be a distraction?

A. Whilst in school, the school dogs will remain in either of two designated science rooms or the vocational room. When either dog requires quiet time or needs to eat or rest the science prep room will be available.

Q. Who is the legal owner of the dogs and who pays for their costs?

A. Oscar's legal owner is Claire. Archie's legal owner is Keith. They have full responsibility for the welfare of the school dogs and all expenses relating to pet insurance, food and other expenses and ensuring that the dog is vaccinated, wormed and flea treated.

Q. How will the dogs be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?

A. In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted in an area just outside of the school site between us and Walker riverside. This is a fenced off designated area that will be cleaned after every use. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

Q. How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A. The dogs will have a combination of arrangements, sometimes staying in school all day. On other occasions only being in the building for specific sessions during the day. The dogs will not work with the same group of students at the same time and will not be asked to share a space whilst students are present.

The dogs will have regular "down time" when they can be walked and toileted throughout the school day. Archie and Oscar will also have opportunities to sleep in a quiet secure crate kept in the Science prep room.

Q. How will this be managed where students have allergies?

A. Where a student is known to be allergenic to dogs, measures shall be taken to reduce contact. Those students identified as "at risk" will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for students and adults that are allergic to dogs. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies.

Q. My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?

A. Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and students do not need to have close contact with either Archie or Oscar. We hope to work closely with parents and carers of students who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.

Q. Will my child pick up infections from the dog?

A. Both dogs will be fully vaccinated, treated regularly for worms and fleas and will be kept away from school if ill. Students will be required to wash and sanitise their hands before and after they have been in contact with the dogs. There will be a dedicated dog toilet area away from areas that students access and no child will be asked to clean up after the dog.

Behaviour around the school dog

Q. Can I feed the dogs?

A. Both Archie and Oscar will be offered food whilst in school. At times, students may be offered the opportunity to assist staff when feeding the dogs. The food offered shall be restricted to appropriate wet/dry dog food. Staff shall explain to students the risks associated with feeding dogs inappropriate food as part of their learning.

Q. Can I play with the dogs?

A. Absolutely. Play time for both dogs will be pre-planned and organised. Students shall be taught appropriate ways to engage with Archie and Oscar using a variety of dog toys. Staff will be present at all times to ensure that neither dog becomes over excited whilst playing with students. Staff shall remove the dogs to a quiet area of the school should they deem it necessary.

Q. Can I pick them up?

A. No. Both Oscar and Archie are fully grown Labradors and, as such, weigh approximately 35kg each.

Q. Can I call them and make a fuss?

A. Under adult supervision, students will learn appropriate methods to engage with both Oscar and Archie in a safe and nurturing manner.

Q. What should I do if I see Archie or Oscar in the corridor with their handlers?

A. The handler will invite you to engage with the dogs if it is appropriate and when calm. If this happens, the handler will explain how to behave around them.