



19th September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to let you know that Sir Charles Parsons School has decided to support our students by having a school dog.

We have undertaken a significant amount of research from other schools who have a school dog established, and are aware of many benefits to having a school dog which include

- A calming effect on pupils, particularly those with behavioural or regulation difficulties;
- Encouraging engagement and participation for some learners;
- Fostering a sense of responsibility;
- Increasing enthusiasm for and enjoyment of animals;
- Teaching children to nurture and respect life;
- Helping children build confidence in reading;
- Improving attendance.

The dogs that will be in school are both Labrador retrievers and are ages 3 & 6 years old respectively. They are called Archie and Oscar and belong to Mrs Andrew and Mr Browell in the science department. The dogs will have a period of familiarisation coming into school and gradually become fully accustomed to the routines of the day and supportive of students within the school.

A risk assessment has been undertaken and will be updated and reviewed regularly. Both dogs have partaken in puppy training programmes to support their good behaviours and responses. They will also be part of a regular vaccination programme and kept in good health with regular visits to the vets. The dogs will not be allowed into school if they are unwell. If at any point it comes to light that either dog does not actively enjoy life in the school environment, then they will no longer attend.

The dog's main place of residence in school will be in the science department, including the science prep room, an area that students do not access. Whilst moving around the school, the dogs will be kept on a short lead and will always be with a member of staff. You will be able to view the school dog policy on the school website along with some FAQ's information.

We understand that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but that for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent / carer who does not wish their child to interact with the dog is invited to get in touch with the school office, via email or letter, to inform us of their decision, admin@scp.newcastle.sch.uk.

Please also ensure your child's medical record is up-to-date and the school has been made aware of any allergies. Permission for your child to have some contact with the school dog will be presumed if no written communication to the school office is received.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Hamilton', is located below the 'Yours sincerely,' text.

Karen Hamilton, Head Teacher