ST ALPHEGE CE INFANT SCHOOL

Executive Head: Mrs Liz Thomas-Friend, Head of School: Mrs Jacqui Spinks,
Oxford Street, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 1DA, TEL: 01227 272977, Email: headteacher@st-alphege.kent.sch.uk

Dear Families,

We are delighted to introduce to you our newest 'member of staff': Pamplemousse.



Pamplemousse is a 6 year old dachshund shi-tzu poodle cross, originally from New Zealand. He is a family dog and belongs to Rev Ripeka and Rev Eddie and is very used to children. Pamplemousse has recently trained and qualified as a Pets as Therapy (PAT) dog. From term 2, he will be volunteering with us in school once a week, accompanied by Rev Ripeka. His attendance in school is fully risk assessed.

Information and FAQs

What are the benefits of having a school dog?
Therapy dogs have been working in schools for the past 5 years across the UK and numerous research studies have shown the multiple benefits of having them. They have been commonplace in schools in the USA and Australia for many years.
Evidence indicates that benefits include:

• **Cognitive** – companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem-solving and game-playing

• **Social** – a dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, wellbeing and focused interaction with others

• **Emotional** – a school dog improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. Dogs can also teach compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety.

• **Physical** – interaction with a furry friend reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, gives motivation to move, walk and stimulates the senses

• **Environmental** – a dog in a school increases the sense of a family environment, with all of the above benefits continuing long after the school day is over.

· **Reading to dogs** has been proven to help children develop literacy skills and build confidence, through both the calming effect the dog's presence has on children as well as the fact that a dog will listen to children read without being judgemental or critical. This comforting environment helps to nurture children's enthusiasm for reading and provides them with the confidence to read aloud.

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PAT website link: https://www.petsastherapy.org/book-a-visit/schools?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=20144727804&gbraid=0AAAAABhbin_W_9cshHKlyaordvOLXlbxS&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI44inpfq2lwMVBpiDBx2w_A-SEAAYASAAEgLlivD_BwE

Some concerns you may have:

My child is allergic to dogs
It is understandable that some parents may be concerned about possible allergic reactions to the presence of a dog in school. Pamplemousse has a thorough cleanliness and grooming regime and will only be allowed with pupils who voluntarily wish to spend time with him and have parental permission to do so. Pamplemousse is part Poodle and therefore classed as having a hypoallergenic coat. We appreciate that this does not mean he is allergen free, however the risk to children with allergies is much reduced.

Will the dog be properly cared for?
Pamplemouuse will be extremely well looked after whilst on school premises, and will always be accompanied by his owner Rev Ripeka. Rev Ripeka will ensure that he is not overwhelmed and has the opportunity to sleep or have quiet time if he needs it. Pamplemousse visits the vet regularly for all his injections, as well as regular check-ups. If he is unwell for any reason he will not come in to school.

My child is scared of dogs
Some children may have a fear of dogs. Pamplemousse will only be in contact with children whose parents have given permission for them to do so. He has a loving and gentle nature and his training will help him to be calm when interacting with children. Experience and research have shown that, with proper guidance and handling, children can learn to overcome their fear of animals and grow in respect and appreciation for them.

The school has a 'no dogs' policy
Our school does have a 'no dogs on site' policy, however because Pamplemousse is working in the school, the same rules apply to him as they do to other 'working' dogs. He is risk assessed and fully insured to carry out his role, thus allowing him to be on the school site.

If you are happy with all of the above you do not need to take any further action. If however you ***do not*** wish your child to have time with our Pets As Therpay dog, please complete and return the form below:

Please only complete if you DO NOT wish your child to have time with Pamplemousse

Name of Child: _____ Class: _____

o I do not give permission for my child to come into direct contact with the dog.
o My child has an allergy to dogs and must not come into contact with dog.

Signed: _____ Date _____
(Parent/Carer)

Name in (Block Capitals): _____