



Whitstable & Seasalter Endowed

Church of England (Aided) Junior School

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Tuesday 22 September 2026

Dear Families of The Endowed,

THERAPY DOG

We are incredibly excited to introduce to you a four-legged member of the team. Jimmy is our school Therapy Dog. Jimmy visits our school to spend some time with children who may need support with their confidence, along with his owner Laura.

"Hi, my name is Laura and I will be visiting the school on a Monday afternoon with my four-legged friend, Jimmy. We will be there to support the children by allowing them to come a sit, talk or read to Jimmy. Jimmy is a Labrador/Golden Retriever cross and is a retired working Guide Dog and we have been a partnership since 2018. Jimmy is a very gentle, calm and loving boy! We forward to meeting you all soon"

The benefits of a school dog

School dogs have been proven to help develop Pupils' reading skills, improve behaviour, attendance and academic confidence, as well as increasing student understanding of responsibility and in the development of empathy and nurturing skills. At Whitstable Endowed, we hope that a school dog will be a beneficial addition to our therapeutic offer, in addition to the interventions we already offer.

Animal assisted interventions (also known as AAI's) can:

- Teach empathy and appropriate interpersonal skills;
- Help individuals develop social skills;
- Be soothing;
- Improve a child's ability to pick up on social cues which are imperative to human relationships;
- Therapy dogs have been shown to support emotional regulation through the positive impact on the autonomic nervous system
- Show that children working with therapy dogs have experienced increased improved motivation for learning, resulting in improved outcomes;
- Therapy dogs are being used to support children with their social and emotional learning needs, which can also aid literacy development.

Research into the effects of therapy dogs in schools is showing a range of benefits including:

- Increase in school attendance;
- Improved confidence;
- Decreased pupil anxiety resulting in improvements in learning, such as increases in reading and writing levels;
- Improved motivation to learn;





- Enhanced relationships with peers and teachers due to experiencing trust and unconditional positive interactions with a therapy dog;
- Helping children learn how to express their feelings and enter into more trusting relationships.
- Increase social skills and self-esteem
- Teach responsibility and respect to all life

Confidence benefits

"If children are partnered with a dog to read to, for example, the dog provides comfort, encourages positive social behaviour, enhances self-esteem, motivates speech and inspires children to have fun and enjoy the non-judgemental experience"

Please ensure that any dog allergies or a fear of dogs are reported us via the form at the end of this letter.

If we do not hear from you, we will assume that your child can work with the Therapy Dog.

Kind regards,

Janine Hewitt

Assistant Headteacher/SENCo

Please return to the School IF your child has allergies to or a fear of dogs.

School Dog

My child..... in Class, is allergic to / has a fear of dogs.

and **will not** be able to interact or spend time with Jimmy, the school dog.

Signed:_____

Parent name:_____

Date:_____