The Federation of Fairfield and Colneis

Fairfield Infant School
High Road West
Felixstowe
Suffolk
IP11 9JB
Tel: 01394 283206
fairfieldandcolneis.co.uk
fairfieldoffice@fairfieldandcolneis.co.uk

Headteacher
Mr Mark Girling
Deputy Headteacher
Mr Keith Rimmer
Assistant Headteacher/SENDCo
Miss Emma Gooding
Assistant Headteacher
Mr Adam Teare

Colneis Junior School
Colneis Road
Felixstowe
Suffolk
IP11 9HH
Tel: 01394 284052
fairfieldandcolneis.co.uk
colneisoffice@fairfieldandcolneis.co.uk

6th March 2025

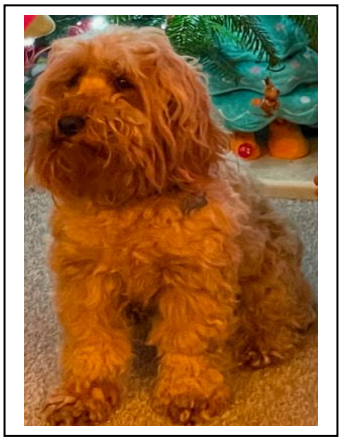
School Dog

Dear Parent / Guardian

For a number of months, the school senior leaders have been discussing the benefits of a school dog and a decision has been made to go forward with this initiative. There are a number of school dogs already in post locally and around the country. I am sure you will agree that this is an exciting opportunity for the school, but you may have some questions. Outlined below is some more information about having a school dog.

Sungura is a 4-year-old Cockapoo, belongs to me and I will be the main point of contact for any questions regarding her work in school. Sungura will be gradually introduced to both school environments throughout the rest of the year and we hope she will become fully accustomed to the routines of the school day and begin to be supportive to students. We will manage this at a pace which suits Sungura's needs and follows the advice we have received from an animal behaviourist.

We have undertaken a significant amount of research, have visited other schools who have a school dog established, and are aware of many benefits, including;



- A calming effect on pupils, particularly those with behavioural or learning difficulties.
- Encouraging expression and participation in more withdrawn children.
- Fostering a sense of responsibility.
- Improved behaviour, attendance and concentration, reduced stress and improved self- esteem.
- Motivating pupils to think and to learn, as most children have a high level of natural interest in, enthusiasm for, and enjoyment of animals.
- Encouraging respect and thereby improving pupils' relationships with each other, parents and teachers.
- Teaching children to nurture and respect life.
- Helping work undertaken with the most vulnerable children, and educational improvements with lower achievers.
- Helping children build confidence in reading.

How will the school plan for this?

- A school dog policy, including a full risk assessment, has been written.
- All contact with children will be carefully planned and children will not be left unsupervised with Sungura.
- When not working, Sungura will be based in the Head Teachers office.

What about allergies?

- Sungura is a Cockapoo and is one of the most hypoallergenic dogs. This breed has hair rather than fur and so she naturally has very low allergy and non-shedding qualities.
- All areas of the school are vacuumed and surfaces are wiped down daily.
- Movement around the school will be carefully controlled.
- Any child working with Sungura will wash/sanitise their hands before returning to class.
- Management of allergies or anxieties in connection with Sungura is part of the school dog risk assessment.

Sungura lives with my family. She has completed all of her general training and she will be introduced to the school and children gradually. Sungura's vaccination programme records will be kept as part of the school dog's risk assessment (which can be found on the website).

Whilst moving around, Sungura will be kept on a lead and will always be with a member of staff. You will be able to see the school dog policy on the school website along with the full risk assessment, which will be reviewed regularly. If at any point it comes to light that Sungura does not actively enjoy being within the school environment, she will no longer attend.

It is accepted 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 or carer who does not wish their child to interact with Sungura is invited to email or write to the school office for my attention to inform me of their wishes. Please also ensure that your child's medical record is up to date and the school have 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 has been received by 14th March.

We hope that our children will gain a great deal of enjoyment from having Sungura at school and that she becomes an established part of school life at the Federation.

Yours sincerely

Mr Mark Girling
Headteacher