

Meet 'Miss Molly' our School Therapy Dog

16
weeks
old



Miss Molly had her first visit to school on Tuesday 1st March.

She had a great time exploring the school and meeting everybody. All the children, staff and parents who met her...loved her.

She slept for most of the afternoon!!

Miss Molly will be back for more exploring on Friday 4th March and just wants to share a bit of information to make sure everybody enjoys her visit again...especially Miss Molly 😊

What are the benefits of Miss Molly?

- A calming effect on pupils, staff and parents
- Encouraging expression and participation in more withdrawn children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 pupil relationships with each other, parents and teachers.
- Helping work undertaken with the most vulnerable pupils, and educational improvements with lower achievers.
- Helping children build confidence in reading: - <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/feb/28/dogs-listen-to-children-reading>
- Cognitive – companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem-solving and game-playing
- Physical – interaction with a furry friend reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, assists with pain management, gives motivation to move, walk and stimulates the senses.
- Emotional – Miss Molly improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. She can also teach compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety.
- Social – Miss Molly provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, wellbeing and focused interaction with others.

Miss Molly would like to remind you of how you should approach dogs whether you know them or not to keep yourselves safe.

Remember...

1. Walk, don't run. Running up to a dog can cause it to become fearful or aggressive. A timid dog will cower and feel uncomfortable, guaranteeing the child won't get a chance to pet her. Even worse, a dog with fear aggression may bite.

2. Don't try to approach a dog that is over-excited, even if it is friendly excitement. The dog may knock you over, and is likely already over-stimulated. No need to add to the chaos by exciting the dog further. Because you're a child...you're exciting!

3. Allow personal space. Do not get close enough to a dog to touch it before you declare your intentions.

4. Ask. While maintaining a safe distance, always ask the dog owner if you may pet the dog. Instead of asking "is your dog friendly?" ask "may I please pet your dog?" This lets the owner know exactly what you're after, and allows him to say "no" without branding his dog as unfriendly.

5. Approach slowly, and make sure the dog is facing you. You want the dog to understand that you will do him no harm. Remember, he doesn't know you, either. Never approach a dog from behind, as you may startle them into a fearful reaction. Most dogs will be aware of your presence, but some may be distracted by other things or may be hard of hearing. Be sure the dog sees you.

6. Put your hand out away from your body, palm up. Dogs see palms as an offer of friendship (and sometimes treats). Palm down can be interpreted as aggressive to some dogs, especially if the hand is above the dog's head.

7. Never put your face in a dog's face. Though some dogs, especially puppies, are hard to resist, you never want to risk being bitten in the face. Doggie kisses can be loads of fun, but, even if they are offered, consider where the dog's mouth may have been. Did he just enjoy a poo snack? Kissing your own dog is one thing, but kissing a dog you don't know is a different story.

