FAQ

Therapy Dog at Sacred Heart Primary School

1 What is the purpose of having a Therapy Dog at school?

The purpose of introducing a Therapy Dog at Sacred Heart Primary School is to reduce the number of children who may be experiencing anxiety and stress at school. Studies have shown that the mere presence of a dog can lower stress and anxiety levels and promote relaxation and cardiovascular health by decreasing blood pressure.

2 What sort of dog is it?

The Therapy Dog is a Cavoodle (Cavalier King Charles Spaniel/Poodle) puppy who will be 14 weeks old when it starts at Sacred Heart School in November 2020. Luna is owned by Sacred Heart Primary School. She is fully vaccinated, vet checked regularly, registered with the City of Gosnells and insured by RSPCA.

3 What if my child is allergic to dogs?

The dog is hypoallergenic as it is crossed between a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and the toy or miniature Poodle designed for people who are allergic to pet hair.

4 Is the dog trained?

The Therapy puppy will have on going 'on the job training' as well as being trained at home and also with the RSPCA.

5 Who owns the dog?

Sacred Heart Primary School owns the dog.

6 Where does the dog live?

The Therapy Dog lives with Mrs Annie Gerhardy (Inclusion Support Teacher) and her family.

7 How often will the dog be coming into school?

The dog will be coming into school every day during school Terms and regularly in the holidays

8 Where will the dog be situated during the day whilst here at school?

The Therapy Dog will be based in the school office but will be around the school visiting various classes during the day to see the children if and when needed.

9 What if my child doesn't like dogs or has a fear of dogs?

If your child has a fear of dogs or doesn't like them, please email Amanda McCorkill (amanda.mccorkill@cewa.edu.au) and express your concerns to her. No child will be forced to interact with the dog if they are frightened, scared or don't like dogs. Amanda can put you in touch with Mrs Gerhardy if required.

10 Can I bring my own dog into school now that you have a Therapy Dog at school?

No other dogs will be permitted onto the school grounds at any time. The Therapy Dog is a working dog who will be training to fill the emotional needs of the children at Sacred Heart Primary School.

11 What if there is an unlikely event or incident with the dog?

In the unlikely event of an incident with the Therapy Dog, the child's parents will be contacted immediately and the child will be attended to by a first aid qualified educator.

12 How will my child know what to do if they haven't been around dogs before?

The educators at the Outside School Hours Care, in collaboration with Mrs Gerhardy will educate the children on how to interact with the dog and reinforce this at each visit.

Our aim is to slowly introduce the puppy into the classes with short periods throughout the school as to not overwhelm the dog, or overexcite the children. Initially children will only be able to observe the puppy and not touch. Educators will discuss the dos and don'ts of how to handle a puppy, to prepare the children for the dog entering into their classroom. Children and the puppy will never be alone together and will always be supervised by the owner or a handler.

13 Can I feed the Therapy Dog?

No food or drink is to be given to the Therapy Dog without the handler's permission.

14 Cleanliness of the children and Therapy Dog

Strict hand washing procedures will be implemented before and after patting the dog. Educators will role model and encourage children to wash their hands. The handler will ensure the dog is regularly bathed and is up to date with all vaccinations.

15 How can I as a parent help with preparing my child for the arrival of the Therapy Dog at Sacred Heart School?

You can help your child by having discussions with them about the dog and communicating any questions or fears they may have that we can address. Mrs Gerhardy is happy to work with individual children and families to support them in feeling comfortable and safe.

THERAPY DOG PERMISSION FORM			
CHILD'S NAME		**DATE OF BIRTH**	
DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE AN ALLERGY TO DOGS? YES NO (If YES, please give details below and provide child's Allergy Action Plan)			
DOES YOU CHILD HAVE A FEAR OF DOGS? YES NO (If YES, please give details below)			
PERMISSION I have read the information provided to me regarding the therapy dog visiting the Early Learning Centre and 3 Year Old Kindy and give permission for my child to interact with the dog. **PARENT/ GUARDIAN NAME:** **PARENT/ GUARDIAN SIGNATURE:** **DATE:**			