

**St Saviour's  
& St Olave's  
School**

*An 11-18 Church of England Girls' School*

HEADTEACHER: CATHERINE MAY BSC (HONS) MBA

New Kent Road, London SE1 4AN Tel: 020 7407 1843

email: office@ssso.southwark.sch.uk

6<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **Re: School Therapy Dog**

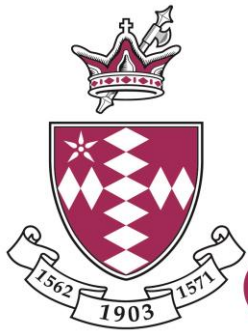
'Pet therapy' is widely accepted as benefitting children's well-being and communication skills. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of students and lower the rate of anxiety simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding. Dogs are increasingly being used in schools with great success and some of you may have seen in the media that they are now being used in some hospitals as the emotional health benefits they bring are so vast. St Saviour's & St Olave's School has made the decision to introduce a dog to the school from 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The puppy, named 'Winnie' will belong to Ms Pagliero, MFL Teacher, and she will be the main point of contact for any dog questions. The puppy will grow up in the school environment becoming fully accustomed to the routines of the day and supportive of students within the school.

The benefits of having a school dog include:

- a calming effect on students;
- improved behaviour and concentration, reduced stress and improved self-esteem;
- encouraging expression, participation and confidence for all students;
- fostering a sense of responsibility;
- motivating students 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 students' relationships with each other, parents and teachers;
- teaching students to nurture and respect life;
- helping work undertaken with the most vulnerable students;
- helping students build confidence in reading;
- improving attendance.

In recent weeks Ms Pagliero has spent time visiting the home of the dog's parent/s to ensure that the temperament of the parent/s is suitable for interaction with children. The puppy will live with Ms Pagliero in her home and be introduced to the school environment and students gradually. The puppy will be thoroughly checked for any illnesses and Ms Pagliero will be responsible for its vaccination programme with all records kept as part of the school dog's risk assessment.

The dog's main place of residence in the first instance will be an office area in the MFL department, which is secure and separate from the classrooms with access to an outside space away from students. Whilst moving around the school, the dog will be kept on a short lead and will always be with a member of staff. There is a full risk assessment which will be reviewed regularly.



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It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all students. Any parent / carer who does not wish their daughter to interact with the dog is invited to write to Ms Pagliero, via email or letter, to inform her of their wishes. Please also ensure your child's medical record is up-to-date and the school has been made aware of any allergies – you can do this via the school office on: [office@ssso.southwark.sch.uk](mailto:office@ssso.southwark.sch.uk) In the meantime, please see the FAQs attached.

**Permission for your daughter to have some contact with the school dog will be presumed if no written communication to Ms Pagliero is received by Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Ms Pagliero can be contacted via email on: [HPagliero@ssso.southwark.sch.uk](mailto:HPagliero@ssso.southwark.sch.uk)**

We hope students will gain a great deal of enjoyment from having a school dog and that Winnie becomes an established part of life at St Saviour's & St Olave's School.

Yours sincerely

Catherine May  
Headteacher