



## ST. STEPHEN'S JUNIOR SCHOOL

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[www.ststephensjuniorschool.co.uk](http://www.ststephensjuniorschool.co.uk)

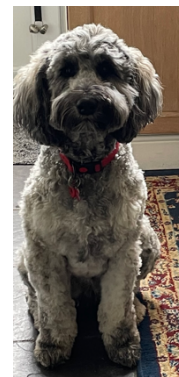
**Headteachers:** Mrs Laura Cutts NPQH & Mrs Sarah Heaney NPQH

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to let you know about an exciting new addition to our team at St. Stephens. Like many schools, we are hoping to have a school dog working with some of the children going forwards and we will be trialling having her in school over the next few Fridays. The dog is called Kaia and belongs to Miss Jackson.

Kaia is a 2-year old Sheepadoodle and when she spent a day in our school last year, it was a great success. Initially, Kaia will just be spending time within the school and its grounds for her to get accustomed to the various noises, smells and of course children and adults! She will not be working with any children until this process has finished and before she does, parents will be consulted.

Whilst in school, Kaia will spend her time with Miss Jackson in her office or in other offices in the school and will always be accompanied by an adult. When moving around the school, Kaia will be on a lead and under the supervision of Miss Jackson or another handler at all times. We have completed a risk assessment regarding this process.



### **Some concerns you might have:**

#### *My child is allergic to dogs*

It is understandable that some of you may be concerned about possible allergic reactions to a school dog. Whilst no dog is completely hypoallergenic, Kaia is 75% Poodle and 25% Old English Sheepdog and her coat is considered to be low-shedding. Double doodles, like Kaia, are significantly less likely to cause an allergic reaction in people with an allergy to pet dander. She will also only be allowed in situations with pupils who voluntarily wish to work with her and **your permission will of course be sought in advance of the dog having access to, and working with, your child in school.**

#### *My child is scared of dogs*

Some children may have had upsetting experiences and thus have a fear of dogs (or another animal). **Our dog will only be in contact with children whose parents have given their permission.** However, her training will help her to be calm and gentle around children; she has a very loving and gentle nature. Experience and research have shown that, with proper guidance and handling, children can learn to overcome their fear of animals and grow in respect and appreciation for them.

#### *The school has a 'no dogs' policy*

Our school does have a 'no dogs' policy, however, the same rules apply to her as they do to other 'working' dogs; she will be on a lead at all times when moving around the school property and will always be accompanied by a trained adult.

We do hope that you will support the school as we know having a school dog will further enrich our school community and foster an enhanced 'sense of family' for all involved with SSJS.

We are hoping that Kaia will start working with children in the school in January after we have completed a consultation period with both the school governors and parents.

Yours Sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature is 'Laura Cutts' and the second is 'Sarah Heaney'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura Cutts and Sarah Heaney

Headteachers

