

# CITY OF DERBY ACADEMY

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Proud Headteacher: Mr P Smith (BA) Hons NPQH



Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

## Introducing Sully – our school dog



I am writing to let you know of some exciting news. From September 2021 we will be introducing our new school dog, called Sully, who will be a regular attendee at The City of Derby Academy. Sully is currently 10 weeks old and is a Labrador.

Sully will be living with our academy SENCo, Miss Smith and her family who will care for Sully outside of school.

Labradors are a breed of dog that are known for their mild temperament. Dogs are increasingly being used in schools with great success and you may have seen in the media that they are now being used in some hospitals due to the extensive emotional health benefits they bring. In an upcoming assembly I will discuss with students the rules, expectations, and benefits around having a school dog. As a school we have undertaken a significant amount of research and believe that there are many benefits to having a school dog including:

- A calming effect on pupils.
- Improved behaviour and concentration.
- Reduced stress and improved self-esteem.
- Increased participation and confidence for all pupils.
- Fostering a sense of responsibility.
- Motivating pupils to think and to learn as most pupils 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 pupils to nurture and respect life.
- Helping work undertaken with the most vulnerable pupils.
- Helping pupils build confidence in reading.
- Improving attendance.
- Further promote our 'Well Being' agenda for pupils and staff.

The dog's main place of residence will be an office area, which is secure and separate from the classrooms. As Sully is still only young, he will slowly be introduced to the school community. Over the coming year all students will have the opportunity to interact with Sully, if they so wish, as he begins to visit more classrooms and moves around the school building. Whilst moving around the school Sully will be kept on a short lead and will always be with an adult.

**Please understand that students who are fearful will, under no circumstances, be forced to meet Sully nor will any child be left alone with him.**

I will publish pictures and updates of Sully via my Headteacher blogs and our social media pages so that everyone can enjoy his development, if you do not want your child to have any contact with Sully, can you please complete the reply slip overleaf.

I hope the students will gain a great deal of enjoyment from having a school dog and that he becomes an established part of life at CoDA. Should you have any queries or questions please see the FAQs attached. If you have any questions/concerns that are not covered, please do not hesitate to contact Miss Smith.

Yours sincerely



**Mr P Smith**  
**Headteacher**

#### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q. Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?

A. The legal owner of the dog will be Miss Smith (SENCo) who will care for the dog out of school hours and will bear the day-to-day costs associated with it.

Q. Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A. Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and our detailed Risk Assessment has been written in conjunction with The Dog Mentor (trainer). This risk assessment is available for anyone to view upon request.

Q. Who is responsible for training?

A. Sully has started a year long training programme with The Dog Mentor. Miss Smith will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its ongoing training.

Q. How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?

A. In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted in a sectioned off area of the school site where students have no access.

Q. How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A. As the dog develops, he will be walked mornings and evenings by his owner. The dog will be kept in a quiet office area and will only have planned and supervised contact with students and visitors. The dog will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to water. We will work closely with The Dog Mentor to ensure the dog's welfare is always carefully considered.

Q. How will this be managed where students have allergies?

A. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for students and adults that are allergic to dogs. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies.

Q. My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?

A. Access to the dog will be carefully managed and supervised and students will not have regular, close contact with him unless permission for this has been given. We hope to work closely with parents of students who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.

City of Derby Academy - Permission slip - Sully

Students - Please return this reply slip to your form tutor once completed by your parent/carer and only if any of the following statements apply. If you do not return this slip this will inform us that you are happy for your child to access the school dog.

- I **do not** give permission for my child to come into direct contact with the dog due to **my child having allergies**.
- I **do not** give permission for my child to come into direct contact with the dog due to them being **afraid of dogs**.

Student's name: .....

Form: .....

Signed: ..... (parent/carer)

Print name:.....

Date: .....