



# St Francis Catholic Primary School

Semper Fidelis  
(Always Faithful)

Tel: 01922 682583



November 2020

Dear Parents & Carers,

I am writing to inform you that we have a new member of our school community. Our very own School Dog.

We are delighted to introduce Florence; she is a 9 month old Labrador. Florence has completed her Kennel Club Bronze award and will continue her training in school and at home.



Dogs are increasingly being welcomed into schools with great success. Some of you may have seen, in the media that therapy dogs are now being used in some hospitals which impacts greatly on patients' improving health and emotional well-being. Please understand that we will do everything we can to reassure children who may be fearful and that under no circumstances will they be forced to meet with Florence. We hope the children will gain a great deal of enjoyment from having their school dog and that she becomes a full member of our team.

Florence will be joining our team for two afternoons a week alongside Mrs Wright, to begin with. We will slowly build up Florence's time in school as the weeks go on.

There are many benefits to having a school dog, including:

- the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower anxiety levels, simply by making the environment happier and more enjoyable;
- dogs in the classroom can be used to calm fears, relieve anxieties and teach skills;
- improved behaviour and concentration, reduced stress and improvement in pupils' self-esteem;
- encouraging expression, participation and confidence for all children;



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Mill Road, Shelfield,  
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- fostering a sense of responsibility;
- 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 pupils' relationships with each other, parents and teachers;
- teaching children to nurture and respect life;
- helping children build confidence in reading;
- improving overall attendance;
- further promoting our well-being agenda for pupils and staff (mine included - enabling me to take a break and take Florence for a walk at lunchtime!)

Florence is fully vaccinated, wormed and had flea treatment in line with current expectations. Florence lives with Mrs Wright, who will ensure Florence's health is always cared for. There will always be a designated member of staff present during any interaction with pupils.

Please know that we are aware of those pupils with allergies and that a full risk assessment has been completed. Florence will not be staying in any classrooms where there are children who may have an adverse reaction. Florence's main place of residence will be in Mrs Wright and Mr Turner's office area. She will slowly be introduced to the school community and we will begin by introducing her to small numbers of children. Whilst moving around the school, Florence will be kept on a short lead and will always be with an adult. Rules and expectations about having Florence in school will be discussed with all children and we will again highlight the many benefits and rewards, too.

We will be sending out a list of FAQs before the end of the week.

Yours sincerely,

*D. Richards*

*A. Wright*

Miss D. Richards

Mrs A. Wright



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