

School Buddy Dog Programme

The use of dogs in schools is becoming increasingly popular. They have been proven to offer companionship, assurance, reduce anxiety, improve literacy, improve mental health assist with therapeutic interventions to name just some of the benefits.

We had been asked for a long time about training dogs to go into a school setting, however we were cautious as we didn't want to overwhelm the dog and wanted to ensure that the dog was well looked after and given a stable home.

In the same way as with our assistance dog programme, we fully understand that the needs of every school is different and we therefore work with the school during the assessment process to work out how the dog would be able to best work within your individual environment as well as work out what a dog would be able to offer to your students.

We have therefore implemented the following regulations into the programme:

- 1) The dog must be owned by a member of the school staff or governing body.
- 2) The dog must be given regular opportunity to rest in a quiet area of the school in a crate at frequent times throughout the day. During the assessment process we will liaise with the school to create a timetable that will work for both your pupils and the dog.
- 3) The dog must be given adequate off lead time.

STAGE ONE: Residential Training: 12 weeks in duration.

- Toilet training
- Crate training to aid with sleeping through the night and toilet training
- Positive association with children, cats, other dogs, noises, traffic, grooming etc.
- Regular video and photo updates of your puppy's progress as well as regular opportunities to meet up with the puppy in Kent.
- Sit on command
- Community access preparation
- Training around distractions
- Training in busy environments
- Foundation verbal recall in busy environments (these need to be continued by the owner as the dog will need to have a firm grounding in this throughout life)
- Foundation whistle recall in busy environments (these need to be continued by the owner as the dog will need to have a firm grounding in this throughout life)
- Training in a variety of environments to suit the needs of your family
- Loose lead walking in a busy environment
- Good manners in the house when meeting and greeting people and dogs. Impulse

control.

- One visit to the school with their trainer
- Two handler days (one to be the day of transition to the owner)

The puppy then moves to their family home where you will need to arrange for them to be neutered at 6 months of age.

STAGE TWO:

This training primarily takes place in the school setting and there are two options for this depending where the school is based.

OPTION ONE

The dog has fortnightly training in the school over a 24 week period. During this time the dog will learn how to behave appropriately in the school setting as well as some therapeutic interventions which are agreed with the school prior to training. Inset day training working with the school handlers.

OPTION TWO

Fortnightly training via zoom to ensure that the dog is maintaining their training levels. The dog will undertake a further 2 weeks of residential training to learn the agreed therapeutic interventions and then there will be two days training in the school setting. The residential training will take place when the dog is between 9-12 months of age. Inset day training working with the school handlers.

OPTION THREE

The intensity of this training mirrors the training of our assistance dogs and the dog will undertake 9 months of residential training before transitioning to the school. This option is most suited to Special Needs Schools.

