

# Oak View - School Dog FAQ's

## **Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?**

Bella's legal owner will be Mrs O'Shaughnessy who will care for her out of school hours in her home. She will bear the majority of the costs associated with having a pet dog including the purchase of the dog. The School will support the costs associated with her work in school and will undertake to raise funds in support of the Dogs Helping Kids charity.

## **Is the dog from a reputable breeder?**

Yes, we spent a considerable time looking into this and Bella has been sourced from a Kennel Club Assured Breeder.

## **Will the dog be a distraction?**

Bella will 'live' in the school admin office when she is in school. This office is separate from the classrooms and Bella will have very limited interaction with pupils in her first year. After this time she will only meet with pupils under strict supervision.

## **Has a risk assessment been undertaken?**

Yes a formal Risk Assessment has taken place. Our School Dog Policy is currently being developed. It will be available shortly and can be viewed on the School Website.

## **Who is responsible for training?**

As the legal owner of Bella, this will be undertaken by Mrs O'Shaughnessy. Working with DHK we have sourced a highly qualified dog trainer and behaviourist.

## **When will the dog come into school?**

Bella will start coming into school during the Easter Break to start getting used to this new environment.

## **How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?**

Bella will be toileted in a sectioned-off area at the front of the school site where children do not have access. In the early stages of training if the dog was to have an 'accident' this would be cleared up immediately by a member of staff who is happy to do so with suitable cleaning products. Children will never be asked to handle dog waste.

## **How will the dog's welfare be considered?**

During the Easter Break Bella will initially come to School for a few hours each day with this time being gradually built up. She will be walked regularly by Mrs O'Shaughnessy and will have many opportunities to use the toileting area. Bella will 'live' in the admin office and will only have planned and supervised contact with students and visitors. She will be provided with unlimited access to water, food, a cozy bed, a 'safe' area in her crate along with lots of stimulating toys. We will work very closely with DHK and other professionals to ensure her welfare is always of the utmost importance.

## **Will Bella be properly cared for?**

Bella will be extremely well looked after. She will live with Mrs O'Shaughnessy and her family and will come to school most days, staying in the admin office while she completes her Puppy Training. She will then start to work with pupils in the school but will always be accompanied by Mrs O'Shaughnessy who is being trained to support Bella in her role.

## **Health and well-being of the dog**

The dog will receive all vaccinations, be wormed, groomed and cared for.

The dog will not attend school if it is unwell and it will not return to school until it is fit to do so.

Mrs O'Shaughnessy (the owner of the dog) will have pet insurance to insure that if it is ill the dog will receive immediate medical attention.

The dog will be registered with a local vet and receive regular check-ups. The charity will also see the dog regularly to check and assess its training and provision by the school.

## **My child is frightened of dogs; how will this be managed?**

Access to Bella will be carefully managed and supervised. We understand that some children may have had upsetting experiences and thus have a fear of dogs. Bella 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. Research has shown that, with proper guidance and handling, children can learn to overcome their fear of animals and grow in respect and appreciation for them.

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

It is understandable that some of you may be concerned about possible allergic reactions to a school dog. Allergies are most prevalent when pet dander is present. Bella will be subjected to a very thorough cleanliness and grooming regime to help reduce the risk of allergens and will be fed on a premium diet, as recommended by her breeder. This also reduces dander problems in dogs making them more hypoallergenic. In addition to this, the school is cleaned and vacuumed on a daily basis. Pupils will not need to touch Bella unless of course they wish to do so, this will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. Research shows that simply washing their hands after working with a dog should help with allergies. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies.

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

Our school does have a 'no dogs' policy and this will remain in place. This means that no dogs are allowed on the site (i.e., when children are dropped off and collected). However, Bella will be training to become an Educational Assistance Dog and different rules apply (such as for hearing or guide dogs). She will be on a leash at all times when moving around the school property and will always be accompanied by a trained adult, namely Mrs O'Shaughnessy. Bella will also be fully insured to carry out her role thus allowing her to be on the school site.

## **Safety around the dog**

All DHK Dogs are highly trained, rigorously assessed and will only become certified school dogs if they are gentle and loving with children at all times.

Please don't hesitate to contact school if you have any questions that have not been covered above. This should be done by email at: [admin@oakview.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@oakview.herts.sch.uk) (please put School Dog on the subject line).

Thank you in advance for supporting us in introducing a school dog to Oak View. We are sure that the children are going to love having Bella as a member of our school community