4 October 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

We have the opportunity for a Pets as Therapy dog Jenga a cocker spaniel mix to visit Manor Green School and spend some time with students in our class. This will enable the students to form a relationship with the dog and learn about looking after a pet. Alongside this we will primarily be using her for intensive communication sessions to encourage children to speak and to work on identifying cause and effect in a different environment.

Numerous research studies have shown the benefits of therapy dogs in schools. They have shown that they can help to provide a holistic and rich teaching environment developing cognitive, social, emotional and physical attributes for children. The evidence has shown that enjoying the companionship of a dog can help to stimulate memory, problem solving and to encourage playing games and turn taking. Alongside this it enables children to start asking questions and create discussions and encourages wellbeing and focused interaction with others. A school dog improves self-esteem, and lifts mood through fun and games. Playing and working with dogs can also teach compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety. Most importantly for some pupils the biggest benefit will be that interacting with dogs can reduce blood pressure having a calming effect, and they can provide tactile stimulation for those who need it. It can also assist with motivation to encourage children to move, walk and stimulate the senses.

The dog will begin by coming in on a Friday to help building communication and language. Small groups of children will work with her at a time in a separate room away from the classrooms. When she is not working with small groups she will be based in Browne class where she will have a bed and kept secure. While some children may have phobias of dogs, it is important to outline that Jenga the dog has been trained and only accepted to be of Pets as Therapy standard due to the fact she is well trained, calm around both children and adults and is incredibly docile. Alongside this she is well groomed and cleaned reducing any risk of allergies.

Please could you advise if your child has any allergies or phobias we should know about regarding dogs before 13th October 2017 when she will be coming in.

We will of course keep you updated and provide pictures throughout her time with us and let you know how much fun we have with her. Any questions or queries please don’t hesitate to email me on: kara.yardley@manorgreenschool.co.uk

Yours faithfully

Kara Yardley

Browne Class Teacher

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Please return this slip to the Browne Class Teacher by Monday 9 October 2017

My son/daughter\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is not/ is allergic to dogs.

Any other problems you are aware of:

I give/ do not give my permission for my son/daughter to take part in sessions with Jenga.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_