



EXCITING NEWS - WE HAVE AN EXTRA SPECIAL
RISEPARKER JOINING THE TEAM!

PLEASE WELCOME...

'DAISY' THE THERAPY DOG

So, why are we using a therapy dog and what are the benefits
of Animal Assisted Interventions?

The Impact of Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAI) on Children and Young People in Educational Settings

Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAI) are becoming increasingly popular in educational settings, and for good reason; they provide a unique, holistic approach to support the cognitive, behavioural, and emotional well-being of children and young people and as well as supporting individual students, a Therapy Dog's presence in school can have a hugely positive impact on the educational environment in general.

AAI involves the utilisation of animals as a form of educational enhancement, harnessing the human-animal bond to promote improvement in human health, educational goals, and socialisation processes.

1. Understanding Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAI)

Animal-Assisted Interventions encompass a variety of activities that include animals as an integral part of a therapeutic or educational process. These interventions can take multiple forms, including:

- **Animal-Assisted Education (AAE):** An intervention where an animal (a dog, in our case) is used as a part of the educational process, aiming to enhance development and growth through a structured and planned set of educational objectives.
- **Animal-Assisted Activities (AAA):** More casual or recreational interactions that involve pets visiting schools and contribute to quality-of-life improvements, stress reduction, and momentary joy.

2. Benefits of AAI in Schools

Implementing AAI in schools can bring about a host of benefits, affecting different areas of development in children and young people. These include:

- **Emotional Growth and Support:**
 - **Reduction in Anxiety:** Interaction with animals has been shown to reduce levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, helping children feel more relaxed and open to learning.
 - **Emotional Regulation:** The presence of animals can promote happiness and provide comfort, helping students manage their emotions better.

- **Social Skills and Relationship Building:**
 - Enhanced Empathy: Caring for animals can help students learn about empathy and nurturing behaviour, understanding non-verbal communication and responsibility.
 - Improved Interactions: Animals can act as social lubricants, encouraging more hesitant children to interact with peers around a shared interest.

- **Educational Enhancement and Cognitive Development:**
 - Increased Engagement: Animals in the classroom can increase participation and motivation, making students more engaged and eager to attend.
 - Diverse Learning: Animals provide a different context for learning, catering to various educational needs and helping to develop a range of intelligences and competencies.

- **Behavioural Improvements:**
 - Decrease in Disruptive Behaviours: The calming effect of animals can lead to reductions in aggressive or disruptive behaviours.
 - Enhanced Self-Esteem: Success in tasks involving animals can boost confidence and self-esteem, giving children a sense of accomplishment.

3. Considerations for Implementation

While AAI offers multiple benefits, we have, of course, considered certain factors for successful implementation. These include the selection of a suitable Therapy Dog, professional staff training, health and safety measures, and inclusive practices.

Through the PAWS Certified Therapy Dog Trainer programme, our Therapy Dog and handler have undergone rigorous training and completed an official assessment. Through the provision of expert services on this basis, risk assessments, proper hygiene practices and safety protocols will be carefully observed to prevent allergies or injuries. Additionally, sessions are structured to provide important education whilst ensuring safe interactions.

In conclusion, Animal-Assisted Interventions at Rise Park Primary and Nursery School present an innovative approach to support the holistic development of children and young people. By integrating AAI into the educational environment, we can provide a multifaceted experience that not only enhances academic learning but also promotes emotional, social, and behavioural growth.

Please complete the attached consent form by Friday 23rd February to indicate that you are happy for your child to take part in AAI with Daisy or to inform school of any allergies or other concerns that we need to be aware of.

<https://forms.office.com/e/pbgV2uuwms>

