



Highcliffe St. Mark Primary School & Fledglings Pre-School

A Church of England Foundation School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

We are delighted to let you know that Skye, a fully accredited therapy dog, will be visiting our school for one hour on the last Friday of each month, with her first visit being **Friday 30th January**. Therapy dogs are widely used in schools to support children's wellbeing, confidence, and enjoyment of learning.

Skye is accredited through [Therapy Dogs Nationwide](#), is fully insured, and holds all relevant certification required to work safely within a school setting. She has extensive experience supporting children and adults in a variety of settings, including care homes, special needs schools, and a university.

We understand that some children may have a fear of dogs, allergies, or cultural or personal reasons for avoiding contact. Contact with Skye will only take place if you have given permission for your child to participate. Consent (or non-consent) can be provided via Arbor. **Please complete this by 23rd January.**

Children who do not participate will continue their usual activities and will not be required to interact with Skye.

During each visit, small groups of children from Years 3–6 will take part in calm, structured sessions. Activities may include sharing a piece of their learning with Skye, reading to her, or doing some quiet colouring alongside her. Skye will always be accompanied by her trained handler and supervised by school staff.

If you have any questions, or would like more information, there are some Parent FAQs overleaf. You can also contact Mrs Stiles (SEND/CO) via sendco@highcliffeprimary.dorset.sch.uk, who will be happy to help.

Thank you for your support in making this a positive and enriching experience for our children.

Very best wishes,

Claire Barker
Headteacher



PROUD TO BE A
MUSIC MARK
SCHOOL
2023 - 2024



Parent FAQ: Therapy Dog Visits

Q1: Why are we introducing a therapy dog?

A: Therapy dogs have been shown to support children's wellbeing, confidence, and engagement with learning, especially in reading or structured calm activities.

Q2: Will my child have to interact with Skye?

A: No. Only children whose parents provide consent will take part. Children who do not participate will continue their normal school activities.

Q3: How is Skye trained and insured?

A: Skye is fully accredited through Therapy Dogs Nationwide, insured for school visits, and has all relevant vaccinations and checks. She is handled by a trained adult at all times.

Q4: What about allergies or fear of dogs?

A: We are mindful of allergies and fears. Contact with Skye is entirely optional, and risk assessments are in place to ensure a safe environment for all children.

Q5: Which children will participate?

A: Initially, small groups from Years 3–6 will take part in structured sessions. We will review and adapt the programme as needed in future.

Q6: How can I give or withhold consent?

A: Consent (or non-consent) can be submitted via **Arbor**. If you do not consent, your child will not take part.

Q7: Who can I contact for more information?

A: Please contact **Mrs Stiles (SENDCO)** at sendco@highcliffeprimary.dorset.sch.uk for any questions or concerns.