

Friday 26th September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

Read 2 Dogs – Therapy Dog in school

As some of you are already aware, Westgate is signed up to the Pets as Therapy (PAT) charity group. Dog and cat owners volunteer with the PAT group and visit a range of establishments, such as schools, care homes and hospitals to bring comfort and companionship, help improve confidence and self-esteem and improve literacy skills. The aim of the PAT groups is to enrich lives through regular visits.

We were lucky enough to secure a Therapy Dog as part of the PAT 'Read 2 Dogs' scheme and have welcomed Opie, a golden retriever, and her owner Suzanne into school every Monday afternoon as part of the Read 2 Dogs scheme. Research has shown that reading with a dog:

- Helps improve literacy skills and wellbeing
- Develops confidence and interest and enjoyment in reading
- Encourages positive social behaviours and enhances self esteem



We are delighted to be able to welcome back Suzanne and Opie. We would like more children to access Opie and plan for Suzanne and Opie to visit each class and to read to them. We understand that some children may be allergic to dogs or you may want to let us know that your child is nervous around dogs.

As such, please email/phone the School Office, speak to the class teacher or complete the slip at the bottom of this letter **if you would like to let us know that your child may be nervous or if you would like to discuss this further.**

If you have any questions or wish to speak to us further about this, please contact the School Office.

Kind regards,

Mrs Rhonda Kidd

Headteacher

Name of child:

Class:

Tick as appropriate:

- I would like to speak to my child's class teacher about the therapy dog visits.
- I do not need to speak to my child's class teacher but wanted to let them know that

Signed