HOLY TRINITY PEWLEY DOWN

A Federation of Holy Trinity CoE Junior & Pewley Down CoE Infant Schools, Guildford

Therapy Dog Policy

At Holy Trinity Pewley Down we are keen to ensure a sense of belonging and a "zest for learning and a love of life".

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog. We have the opportunity to have a specially trained school dog visit the Junior site each week. Research shows that there are distinct benefits for the whole school community if this is carefully planned.

Only the school dog is allowed on School premises. No other dogs are permitted to come on the School site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Headteacher has been informed beforehand. This includes drop-off and pick-up times.

After undergoing assessment, we are excited to announce that Bertha joined the school team this year and we have been gradually introducing her to working at HTPD. The two primary areas of benefit are pastoral care and learning support. The safety of children as is a key priority. HTPD have developed a robust risk assessment and routines to keep all members of our community safe and to ensure the dog is happy and secure.

Bertha is a two-year-old Labrador who is fully trained and used to children. We will be working very closely with Laura Sutton who is Bertha's owner. Laura is a member of the HTPD staff team, a parent and therapy dog owner. We are very grateful for her support, wisdom and expertise. The care and welfare of the dog is the responsibility of Laura and this includes all food, veterinary care and pet insurance.

HTPD appreciates that there may be some children, parents and staff who do not wish, or are not able to be involved with our school dog. If, for any reason, you are concerned, please contact the school office to let them know. We will be careful to ensure that no child is made to feel uncomfortable when Bertha is in school.

Benefits of a therapy dog to the HTPD community include:

- Learning, including reading
- Improved Self-esteem
- Emotional regulation and support in difficult times (including bereavement)
- Developing responsibility
- Reducing stress
- Developing a knowledge and understanding of animals
- Engendering a feel and sense of community

Bertha has been professionally trained prior to fully working in the school and this training will continue with staff and students at HTPD in the future. Her temperament has been assessed by a trainer to identify her suitability to work in a school. She will always be on the lead with her handler. Children will never be left unsupervised with the dog and there will always be adult supervision from

staff who are experienced with dogs. Children will be taught how to behave appropriately around Bertha and dogs in general. No child, or adult, will need to come into contact with the dog unless they want to.

Children should always wash their hands after handling the dog using soap and water. Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.

The Governing Body of HTPD first adopted this policy in 2023. It will be reviewed biennially by the Governing Body and will be revised as often as may be required, including every time the working dog changes or if another working dog is introduced.

Date adopted: **January 2023**

Date for next review: **February 2025**

Signed:

Clare Brunet
Headteacher

Mark Sharman
Governor of Holy Trinity Pewley Down School
ECMS Committee