

Dear Parents/Carers

## RE: School Therapy Dog

The value of pet 'therapy' is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less overwhelming. In my personal research at my last school, we found that students' attendance drastically increased due to interaction with our dog. Therapy dogs have been found to:

- Decrease distress and increase comfort
- Have a positive effect on students' mood and anxiety
- Improve literacy skills and confidence when read to
- Improve outcomes by improving student wellbeing
- Promote engagement in school (and therefore attendance).

For further information, this article gives a clear breakdown of the benefits of therapy dogs in schools, alongside links to wider research:

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fvets.2021.655104/full>



With this in mind, we have the opportunity to introduce a therapy dog to Borden. Hazy lives with me, and has received extensive training, including up to Kennel Club Gold Good Citizen award. She has also trained and competed in Sporting Agility for 4 years, before retirement in 2020.

Hazy will be in school on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday. She will be taking part in interventions, such as supporting students who are anxious about attending school and those who need to build confidence.

# Borden Grammar School



She has been assessed independently by the charity Canine Concern (Registered Charity Number 1177334 CIO), and secondary age students were involved in this assessment. Clear guidelines are shared with all Canine Concern members on ensuring the welfare of both the dog, the handler and the individuals being visited. Hazy is vaccinated in line with veterinary guidelines, has regular parasite treatments and regular health checks are completed by a vet. She has 3rd Party Liability insured by Canine Concern (CICC01CZ01) and a risk assessment is in place.

If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact Miss Powell. If you do not want your child to interact with Hazy when she is in school, please contact the office at any point to opt out.

We hope that Hazy will have a positive influence on our students.

Yours faithfully

**Miss R Powell**  
**Assistant Headteacher (KS4)**