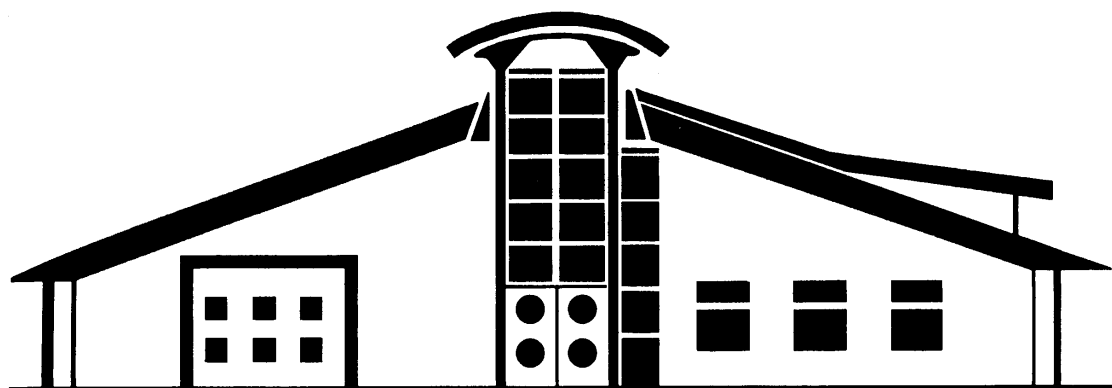




**HOLMESDALE COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL**



## **Pets as Therapy Dogs Policy**

Approved by Governors .....January 2023

Review Date ..... October 2025

# Holmesdale Community Infant School

## Pets as therapy dogs (PAT) in School

### **Introduction:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and procedure to ensure the introduction of Bernard as our PAT dog to Holmesdale Infant School is done so in a safe and structured manner.

We have approached Pets as therapy dogs (PAT) as we believe there is significant evidence to show the positive impact of having a dog in school.

They included but are not limited to:

**Cognitive** - companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem solving and game playing.

• **Social** - a dog provides and positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, well-being and focused interaction with others.

• **Emotional** - a school dog improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. Dogs can also teach compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety.

• **Physical** - interaction with a furry friend reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, assists with pain management, gives motivation to move and stimulates the senses.

• **Environmental** - a dog in school increases the sense of a family environment with all of the above benefits continuing long after the school day is over.

### **Bernard:**

Bernard belongs to Rachel Dixon. He will only attend school at times agreed with the Headteacher. Rachel Dixon will be present with him at all times.

Bernard is a short haired Saluki and is fully immunized, has monthly flea, tick and worm treatments, and is fully insured by Pets as Therapy (PAT).

The ongoing costs of Bernard's care will be met by Rachel Dixon.

### **Interaction with Bernard:**

Under no circumstances will children have close interaction with Bernard unless the school has permission from parents / carers.

Families will receive a letter introducing Bernard. No child will be forced into interaction with Bernard if this makes them feel at all uncomfortable. Any parent/carer can change their mind about interaction by informing the school office.

All interactions must be safe for children, adults and Bernard himself. If the following guidelines are not followed interaction with Bernard will not be allowed.

All interaction must be under the guidance of an authorised adult.

The following guidelines apply to all interactions with Bernard and must be followed by all adults and children:

- Always approach Bernard calmly and slowly.
- Rachel Dixon must be present for the duration of the interaction.
- Start every interaction allowing Bernard to sniff the back of your hand.

- If Bernard needs to move around school this will always be with Rachel Dixon and on a lead.
- Never feed Bernard unless told to by Rachel Dixon.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water / sanitizing gel, after all interactions.

Please see accompanying Risk Assessment for rationale behind these interaction guidelines.