23rd November 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you know, we have had two Pets as Therapy (PAT) dogs, Dora and Barney, on our staff at Dormansland for a couple of years now. The positive impact on those children who have had the opportunity to read to them has been huge and they continue to visit us on a weekly basis.

Empirical evidence has shown that dogs can enhance children’s psychological development, improve social skills, and increase self-esteem. Dogs can also teach social responsibility, compassion, and respect for other living things.

Further potential benefits include:

- **Physical**: interaction with a furry friend reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, and stimulates the senses;
- **Social**: a visit with a dog promotes greater self-esteem and well-being, and focused interaction with others;
- **Cognitive**: companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem solving and game playing;
- **Emotional**: an adorable four-legged visitor improves self-esteem, acceptance from others, reduces anxiety and lifts mood, often provoking laughter.

*Data compiled from the Australian Companion Animal Council*

Further research has demonstrated that where dogs are properly managed in a school setting, this contributes critically to emotional and relational development for all children.

It is with all of this in mind that I have decided to introduce another dog to the children, who will be part of our emotional well-being team. Bourbon is a Fourche Terrier puppy, with low-shedding fur, making him less likely to cause an allergic reaction. He has an extremely gentle temperament and I imagine that the children are going to have a huge amount of fun with him, as well as helping me to train him and take care of him.

There will always be a designated member of staff with Bourbon during any time he spends with the children in school. A full risk assessment has been completed and is available on request. If you have any concerns about your child being involved with Bourbon, please email me directly as soon as possible.

Finally, Bourbon’s arrival next week is a secret from the children and they won’t know until he’s here. I would really appreciate you helping me by keeping the surprise over the weekend! All being well, he arrives on Tuesday.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Stokes