



Heart



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11<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Dear Parent or Carer

We are writing to let you know of some exciting news for The Halifax Academy!

On Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021 we will be welcoming Monty and Orla, our school dogs.

Monty and Orla were born on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> April in a lovely home in North Yorkshire. They are 9-week-old Cockerpoo siblings.

Cockerpoo's are a breed of dog that are known for their loving nature and intelligence. This gives them the right temperament to be a school dog. Monty and Orla will receive full training by the School Dog Mentor. Monty is Miss Lanovy's dog and will live with her, but when in school he will be based in the Secondary Main Office. Orla is Miss Keasey's dog and will live with her, but when in school she will be based in Miss Keasey's office in Primary.

Miss Lanovy and Miss Keasey will be training their dogs to become school dogs so they will, in time, become an integral part of our school family.

What are the benefits of a school dog? Evidence indicates that benefits include:

- Cognitive – companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem-solving and gameplaying.
- Social – a dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, wellbeing 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, walk and stimulates the senses.
- Environmental – a dog in a school increases the sense of a family environment, with all of the above benefits continuing long after the school day is over.
- Reading – reading to dogs has been proven to help children develop literacy skills and build confidence, through both the calming effect the dog's presence has on children as well as the fact that a dog will listen to children read without being judgemental or critical. This comforting environment helps to nurture children's enthusiasm for reading and provides them with the confidence to read aloud.



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The school website and our school Twitter feed will publish pictures of Monty and Orla as they grow so that everyone can enjoy their development. We understand that it is not possible for all families to have a family dog and therefore we hope that this is an opportunity for children to have a “share” in a dog, gain from a relationship and contact on a regular basis and have a friend for life.

The dogs will not enter classes, they will work with small groups and in a 1:1 setting. We hope the children will gain a great deal of enjoyment from having their school dogs and that they become an established part of life at The Halifax Academy. We hope you will join us in welcoming Monty and Orla to The Halifax Academy family and embrace all that they have to offer the school.

We understand that some children might be frightened of animals and that some parents may not want their child to have contact with our dogs, so please feel free to contact the school via email ([office@thehalifaxacademy.org](mailto:office@thehalifaxacademy.org)) to let us know. Should you have any queries or questions on the matter then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jones  
Deputy Head teacher