

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to introduce you to the newest member of the Alban City School family...Lani,



our new school dog! Lani (pronounced Larni) is 15 weeks old and she is a Cavapoochon. She has been chosen to be our school dog because her breed is known to be friendly, intelligent, playful and gentle around children. Her breed is also hypoallergenic so she can be around people with allergies such as asthma or eczema.

There has been extensive research that demonstrates the benefits of having a school dog. "Dogs are a powerfully cost-effective way of helping children feel more secure at school and a low-tech approach to reducing anxiety". Sir Anthony Seldon (Vice Chancellor University of Buckingham). Benefits are widely reported such as supporting the confidence and self-esteem of struggling readers by lending a welcoming and non-threatening ear to listen to children read, reducing anxiety

(children will sometimes talk to a dog to share their worries), improving children's empathy skills by teaching them to put the dog's needs before their own, supporting school attendance and providing companionship and a friendly welcome to the school.

Lani will be based in my office. She will never be unsupervised around the school, and no child will have unsupervised access to her. She is being introduced to school at a young age to help with her training, although she will not be formally trained as an assistance or therapy dog. She is simply our school dog and part of our wellbeing team.

The children will be introduced to her gradually and be taught about how to behave around her for her wellbeing as well as their own. A risk assessment is published on the policies section of our website with the approval of the governing body. However, if you do not wish for your child to have any direct contact with her please let the school office know.

Due to the risks of Covid 19 transmission, if you see her with me in the playground, please say hello but do not touch her or allow your child to touch her. Children will have to wash their hands before and after touching her in school.

As ever, please speak to me in the playground if you have any further questions, and I look forward to introducing Lani to the Alban City School community over the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Stray