

Volunteer Guidelines Therapy & Nurture Visit

As well as our Read2Dogs Programme, Pets As Therapy also offer Therapy & Nurture visits to schools.

We have seen through our Read2Dogs Programme that visits from a Pets As Therapy visiting team, helps to promote higher levels of social, emotional and mental health amongst children.

Such visits can help to lower anxiety and stress found in children and enhance the feelings of companionship helping to tackle feelings of loneliness or isolation.

Pets As Therapy visits can also help to improve the lives of children with autism, selective mutism, physical and mental disabilities by developing their confidence, interest and enjoyment of the school environment, encouraging the children to speak or interact with the dog, where they may not be comfortable or confident speaking to or in front of an adult or their peers.

If you have been asked to provide Therapy & Nurture visits at a School, please keep in mind the following:

- A member of the school's staff must be present at all times for the duration of each visit
- Somewhere quiet for the sessions to take place should be provided.
- The school are responsible for allocating children to attend the sessions.
- All session content should be decided and arranged by the school, whether this be spending quiet time with the dog, reading, learning about dogs and how to approach/care for them etc.
- As a visiting team, you may only visit for up to two hours per day, this is for the comfort of the animal and will be determined by the volunteer, please have a "comfort break" after an hour to have a drink etc.
- Please remember that Pets As Therapy visiting teams are volunteers and are not trained teaching staff.

Please note: We strongly advise that the school discuss the session content with you in advance as you may wish to carry out research to help you deliver the best possible service to the school and the children involved.

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