

Read2Dogs and Therapy & Nurture School Visit Agreement

The primary aim of Pets As Therapy is to bring regular animal companionship and comfort to patients/residents in hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, schools and other establishments by means of visits from volunteers and their registered temperament-tested pets.

Since the start of the Pets As Therapy journey in 1983, over 26,000 dogs have been registered with us. Every year some of these retire and new dogs and cats, having first passed our assessment on health, temperament, suitability and stability grounds, join us to become, with their owner, a proud 'PAT Team'.

Launched in 2010, Read2Dogs is a scheme developed to help children gain confidence in reading. Some school children find reading in front of their classmates and teacher daunting and can become nervous and stressed, however when a PAT Dog enters the group, they often become less stressed and self-conscious, relaxing as the dogs are non-judgemental. PAT Dogs provide comfort, encourage positive social behaviours, enhance self-esteem, motivate speech and inspire young people to have fun. It has been proven to help children gain confidence and they enjoy and benefit greatly from the reading experience.

Our PAT teams can only visit schools that are registered with us. If you have not done so, please visit our site and complete the [registration form](#).

There is an annual contribution of £60 towards the costs of administering the service for each new volunteer placement agreed.

Read2Dogs Visits

- The students will be selected by their teachers as those who would benefit most from this intervention; normally young people who lack confidence or have difficulty with reading or attention deficit. The teacher chooses and provides appropriate books.
- Teachers are in charge and in attendance constantly during Pets As Therapy visits.
- It is suggested that the sessions for each young person should be no longer than 15 minutes.
- The PAT Dog is taken into a classroom is under the control of the PAT Volunteer, who initially introduce themselves and their PAT Dog – his name, breed, age and what they enjoy, and a little about them being a special visitor. The students are also told how much the dog enjoys hearing stories and spending time with people.
- The PAT Volunteer holds their PAT Dog on a lead at all times, but the pupil(s) should be allowed to sit close so they can interact with the dog.
- The PAT volunteer and their pet must display the correct photographic PAT ID badges as issued by the Charity

The PAT Dog can then be used in many ways e.g. the teacher may say "Buster can't hear you and would really like to hear this story, can you speak up so that Buster can hear?" Or, "Buster doesn't know that word Peter, can you tell Buster what it means?" The PAT Dog can also be shown pictures and the student explains to the dog what the pictures are.

There is also the option for children to learn how to care for a pet, how to behave around animals for example, in a Therapy & Nurture visit, promoting social skills and confidence both in and outside of school.

**Read2Dogs and Therapy & Nurture School Visit
RISK ASSESSMENT**

IDENTIFYING THE RISK	RISK RATING	CONTROL MEASURES	OUTCOME
COVID-19 Infection Control	Low	PAT volunteer, teacher and pupils must adhere to the latest government guidelines at all times. If any member of staff or pupils of the school or the PAT volunteer have displayed symptoms of COVID-19 or have been contacted by NHS Test & Trace, they must defer the visit for a minimum 14 days.	Low
Transmission via contact with PAT dog	Low	As with the recommendations designed to limit spread, basic hygiene measures must be implemented. Members of staff and pupils must wash/sanitise your hands before and after contact with a PAT dog. More information can be found on the World Organisation for Animal Health website which has specific advice on companion animals and coronavirus.	Low
Hygiene issues from dogs Allergies to dogs	Low	Only registered Pets As Therapy Dogs to be involved as they are vaccinated, wormed and flea protected in accordance with Pets As Therapy Policy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child to use hand gel after touching dog. • Owner to ensure dog has opportunity to relieve itself outside school premises. • Dog to have access via alternative door and not to walk through the school. • All pupils having contact with a dog to have written parental consent. 	Low
Pupils may have behaviour problems	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear expectations for behaviour laid down to pupils. • Pets As Therapy volunteer to have control of the dog at all times and dog to be kept on lead which must be held by the volunteer. 	Low
Members of staff may be inexperienced around dogs	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of school staff will lead reading sessions. Pets As Therapy will control the dog at all times in accordance with the Pets As Therapy volunteer handbook . 	Low
Fear of dog harming child Animal bites, scratches and animal parasites	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog on lead and under the control of volunteer at all times. • Only registered Pets As Therapy dogs to take part in intervention as they are vaccinated, wormed and are covered by flea protection as per Pets As Therapy rules. • Staff to control children at all times. • Child instructed and supervised how to approach dog by the Pets As Therapy volunteer. 	Low

Our volunteers are aware that you, as a school accepting our service, may require further references, special police checks, or occupational health interviews and they have declared that they will abide by your policies and procedures if they commit to visiting there.

Please make sure that you give our volunteer your Health and Safety and Fire procedures and any other regulations that you might require them to follow.

They have agreed to wear any security badges you require as well as the Pets As Therapy photo ID and that of their pet. It is your guarantee that your visitor remains a registered volunteer of Pets As Therapy and is bound by its policies.

Pets As Therapy asks that you agree to ensure that your staff treat our volunteers and their PAT dogs/cats with respect and dignity during their visits to you. They are bound by our policies and procedures and should never be asked to contravene these by putting their PAT pets or themselves at risk in any way. **Volunteers must be accompanied at all times by a member of staff and never left alone with a service user.**

In the event that there is an incident where either one of our volunteers or their pet is involved, they are required by Pets As Therapy to notify Head Office.

If you require a copy of the Volunteers Handbook or any other information or have any concerns which you would like to discuss, please call Head Office on 01865 671440.

We hope that you will receive many visits from our very special volunteers and their companion animals and that all your staff and pupils will feel the proven benefits of our service.

Please sign the form below (School Visit Confirmation and Acceptance PAT7), take a copy of the completed form for your records, then email or post:

Ann Taylor (Ref: PAT7)

Pets As Therapy
59 Monument Business Park
Warpsgrove Lane
Chalgrove
Oxfordshire OX44 7RW

Tel: 01865 671440
Email: ataylor@petsastherapy.org

SCHOOL VISIT CONFIRMATION AND ACCEPTANCE - PAT7

Please complete and sign as confirmation that you have read the School Visit Agreement and Risk Assessment and agree to the conditions as laid out in that document.

ONLY FORMS SIGNED BY THE HEAD OR DEPUTY HEADTEACHER OR SENCO WILL BE ACCEPTED AS A VALID AGREEMENT.

Please return the completed form to Ann Taylor at ataylor@petsastherapy.org.

SCHOOL DETAILS	BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE
SCHOOL NAME:	
POSTCODE:	ID NO:
CONTACT NAME:	POSITION:
EMAIL:	TEL NO:
SIGNATURE:	DATE:
Please indicate if you require Read2Dogs and/or Therapy & Nurture visits.	
Read2Dogs <input type="checkbox"/>	Therapy & Nurture <input type="checkbox"/>
VOLUNTEER DETAILS	BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE
NAME:	
PAT REFERENCE NO:	PET'S NAME:
SIGNATURE:	DATE:

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Pets As Therapy acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and Charity Commission requirements.

This policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children have a positive and enjoyable experience in a safe and child centred environment and are protected from abuse whilst participating in an activity with a Pets As Therapy Volunteer.

Pets As Therapy acknowledges that some children, including disabled children, young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our safeguarding children policy Pets As Therapy will:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people. This forms part of the memorandum with establishments.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of reported incidents/concerns of abuse when reported and support provided to the individual/s that raise or disclose the concern.
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Ensure robust safeguarding reporting mechanisms to the local safeguarding children leads are in operation and concerns are reported without delay.
- The Board reserves the right to liaise with the host establishment and the Disclosure and Barring Service at any time with regards to any Volunteer of the Charity or for any applicant who applies to be a Volunteer or Employee of the Charity.
- No Volunteer is accepted into the Charity unless at least two written references have been obtained certifying that the applicant is of good character. References are obtained from a person independent of the applicant and are checked by the Charity in the event of any doubt either directly with their signatories or, if doubt remains, with the police.
- No PAT Volunteer visit may be made on behalf of the Charity to any child in the care of an establishment **without the presence of a member of the Establishment's staff in attendance at all times.**
- Only PAT Volunteer visits with animals registered with the Charity and made on behalf of Pets As Therapy are covered by Pets As Therapy's third-party insurance.

Please contact Head Office immediately on 01865 671440 if you have any concerns about any aspect relating to our children safeguarding policy.