

Virtual In-school Read2Dogs and Therapy & Nurture Visits

As the impact COVID-19 pandemic continues and the physical visits made by our volunteers are not always possible we have introduced a new service, virtual Read2Dogs sessions for children.

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. Now more than ever, our aim is to continue to provide this service to as many schools and children as possible during the pandemic.

Each session is 15-20 minutes long and the books will be from an agreed list of titles, where possible the school will provide a copy for the volunteer.

The volunteer must participate in the session on a laptop or desktop PC, not a hand held device.

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.

Virtual Read2Dogs Protocol:

Virtual Read2Dogs Sessions:

- All virtual sessions must be pre-arranged by the school.
- An agreed day and time for the sessions is most convenient for both parties should be agreed and where possible this should be kept the same throughout the period of delivery. This will help to provide structure for both the school and the volunteer.
- The school initiates and hosts the session, giving access to the PAT volunteer.
- Teachers are in charge and in attendance constantly during the session, if the teacher leaves the room then the PAT volunteer must end the session immediately.
- Only sessions arranged by the school will be considered PAT volunteering and be covered by PAT insurance and PAT safeguarding policies.
- A Read2Dogs Virtual PAT7 agreement between the school, parents/legal guardian and volunteer must be complete and filed at PAT Head Office before virtual sessions can commence.
- During a remote session, both the PAT volunteer and their pet must display the correct photographic PAT ID badges as issued by the Charity.
- Personal contact details must not be shared between the volunteer and parent or child.
- A reminder to volunteers, you are inviting someone into your own home so please give careful consideration to where you hold your session.
- Virtual sessions must not be recorded in any form.

Virtual Read2Dogs Programme

RISK ASSESSMENT

Identifying the Risk	Risk Rating	Control measures	Outcome
Pupils being left unaccompanied during the session.	Low	Parents/Guardians of all pupils participating in remote sessions have agreed to the terms of remote Read2Dogs which includes a teacher must be present at all times. PAT volunteers have clear instructions to immediately end the session if the nominated adult leaves at any point during the session.	Low
Sharing of personal contact details.	Low	The school will host the session and invite the PAT volunteer to attend, contact details will not be shared.	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 (Virtual 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

VIRTUAL VISIT CONFIRMATION AND ACCEPTANCE - PAT7

Please complete and sign as confirmation that you have read the School Visit protocol 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:
VOLUNTEER DETAILS	BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE
NAME:	
PAT REFERENCE NO:	PET'S NAME:
SIGNATURE:	DATE:

Top Tips for volunteers:

- It may be beneficial to have a brief chat with the teacher beforehand to gain any useful information on the pupils that might support communication during session.
- Arrange your zoom session in a separate, quiet room with no household passers-by or distracting noise.
- Be punctual when zooming in order to save pupils from becoming anxious and difficult to engage in session.
- The chosen book must be to hand and reading the book in advance of the session so you are familiar with the text will help with possible prompts or shared reading.
- Always greet the pupils and introduce yourself and your pet and ensure they appear excited to be meeting.
- Do a quick sound check so the child can hear you clearly.
- Try and engage your dog in dialogue to avoid the session being just an adult reading with a child e.g. Doug (the dog's) so excited to know what happens next, look at Doug's excited face, do you think Doug might be scared, etc.
- If the child looks anxious, try shared reading so as not to put child on the spot. If the child is quiet, ask them to use a big strong voice for the dog to hear.
- After the book is completed, have a brief conversation with the child about the story, thank the child for taking part before saying goodbye and ending the Zoom session.

Please see our child safe guarding policy on the following page.

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.
- A nominated adult must be present with the child at all times during a virtual Read2Dogs session. If the adult leaves the session, it must be stopped.
- 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.