



Canine Concern Scotland Trust (a Scottish Charitable Trust) established the Therapist Service in 1988. We now have over 700 volunteers who with their specially selected dogs visit patients and residents in hospitals, hospices, residential care and nursing homes, special needs schools and other institutions to provide Pet Therapy. Much of the success of this therapy is based on regular visits so that long-term patients develop a relationship and interact with the volunteer and their pet.
No charge is made for this service.

One pupil, aged 9, said: "When I am reading with Dylan, I feel calm. I have enjoyed getting to know Dylan, he is really friendly and he makes me laugh. After I read with him I get to play with him too. He makes me feel happy when I read to him and when I stroke him I feel calm and relaxed. I think Dylan likes it too because he lies on my knee. I think it makes my reading better."

Another pupil, aged 9, said: "I love reading with Scruuffy because if I make a mistake I know he will not mind. It makes me feel more confident. I would love to read with Scruuffy more because he gives me the time I need to go back and correct myself. He doesn't rush me."

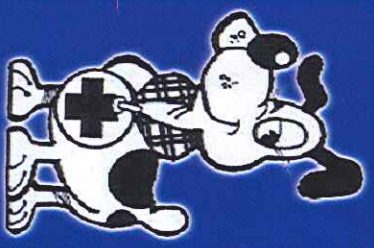
Sacha Oates, Bannockburn Primary School's Support for Learning Teacher, said: "This project is the first of its kind in Scotland and observations made by class teachers once these learners have returned to the classroom have highlighted significant improvements in attitude and willingness to engage. This project is still in the early stages of development, but our hope is that, with improved reader engagement and enjoyment, there will inevitably be an improvement in reading attainment."

Head Teacher of Bannockburn Primary School, Audrey Ross said: "We have seen improved motivation for reading amongst our trial group but this is only the first step for us at Bannockburn. We are already thinking about how this project can be enhanced and extended to impact positively on more children in our school."

Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils Director of Children, Young People and Education David Leng said: "We encourage all our schools to try new ways to improve our children's learning. This is a great project that really connects with our pupils and helps their motivation."

"We care for dogs...and dogs care for us"

"The cost of production of this leaflet has been met from a grant from The Kennel Club Charitable Trust"

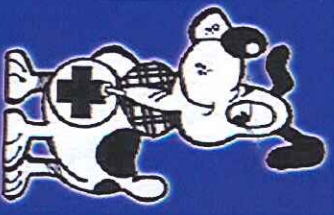


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Reading With Dogs



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Reading with Dogs

Aim

The aim of these events is to encourage young readers who lack confidence with reading to come along to a prearranged session and instead of reading to a person they have the opportunity to read to a Therapet dog.

The idea being that the Therapet dog would listen to them and not judge, allowing them to relax and gain confidence in reading out loud. This allows the reader to gain confidence in their own ability and improve their enjoyment of reading.

CCST has developed and refined guidance for managing this type of session and our aim is to give all readers the same helpful experience no matter what level they are reading at.

At the same time we need to safeguard and ensure the comfort and wellbeing of our Therapets and volunteers.

If you are interested in arranging a "Reading with Dogs" event at a local education facility or library please take note of the criteria and suggestions below. Please make contact with your local CCST Area Representative or with the CCST office in Edinburgh as soon as you begin to consider hosting a "Reading with Dogs" session.

You should try to arrange an early meeting at the site proposed for the session and consider some of the following issues.

Target Group

Young, reluctant readers or readers who lack in confidence in reading out loud.

Persons Present

Child with an adult /support worker / teacher who will assist the child with the reading material. Therapet volunteer and dog.

The Therapet Area Representative may also be present but is not a requirement.

Environment

A small room or area that can be cornered off to allow privacy to the reader and lack of distraction for the dog.

The room should be of adequate size to allow at least two adults, the reader and the Therapet dog to be comfortable. The room can be either be carpeted or not. There should be an entrance which provides ease of access for dogs and preferably to the outside if possible. The length of time in the room requires there to be adequate ventilation to allow the people and Therapet dogs present to be comfortable.

There should be cushions / rugs to allow children to sit at floor level close to the same level as the dog.

There should be convenient parking at the venue which is free, if possible, and close to the venue should there be inclement weather.

Number of Therapets for each session

This will be dependent on the size of the venue, number of readers to be catered for and the individual requirements of the readers. The Therapet Area Representative will be able to provide guidance following discussion with the organiser.

This will vary depending on likely attendance but a large space is necessary to avoid too close proximity and to allow readers to have privacy and minimal disturbance.

Choice of Therapets

The Therapet dogs must be very sociable and relaxed in novel and busy situations. We try to offer the students attending any session a choice of dog breeds to meet, and/or a variety of sizes and breed types.

There is an additional 'Working With Children' assessment of the Therapet which requires to have been completed prior to being selected for this type of Therapet work. Volunteers must also have their Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme(PVG) membership upgraded to cover work with children. This will be arranged by the CCST office.

Timing

The event would run for a maximum of 2 hours and encompass six 20 minute sessions allowing 15 minutes per session and 5 minute turnaround between readers. Experience has shown that the dogs are tired and lose concentration and interest at longer sessions.

At the half way point of the session consideration should be given to allowing the dog to be exercised outside, if required.

Risk Assessment

CCST can assist with advice for venues which will be expected to have an appropriate risk assessment completed prior to the sessions being arranged. A copy of the CCST Public Liability Insurance can be provided as necessary.

For further information please contact the CCST Office on 0131 553 0034, or email to info@canineconcernscotland.org.uk or contact your local CCST Area Representative using the link to Area Representatives on the CCST website www.canineconcernscotland.org.uk.

