



# Raleigh Infant and Admirals Academies

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Dear Parents / Carers,

## Academy Therapy Dog

I am very pleased to let you know that on Friday, we will welcome our Academy therapy dog. Jacob is an 11-year-old black Labrador who has been working in schools for the past four years. Jacob is my family dog and has been behaviourally assessed by the national charity 'Pets As Therapy' to undertake therapeutic visits in public settings, such as schools and hospitals, as an accredited PAT Dog. A significant amount of research has been undertaken regarding the many benefits of having an Academy dog:

- A calming effect on pupils, particularly those with behavioural or learning difficulties;
- Improved behaviour and concentration, reduced stress and improved self-esteem;
- Encouraging expression and participation in more withdrawn children;
- Fostering a sense of responsibility;
- Increasing enthusiasm for and enjoyment of animals which will motivate the children to think and learn;
- Encouraging respect and thereby improving pupils' relationship with each other, parents and teachers;
- Teaching children to nurture and respect life;
- Supporting the work undertaken with the most vulnerable children and educational improvements with low achievers;
- Helping children build confidence in reading as part of the Read2Dogs scheme;
- Helping children who suffer bereavement or are upset in any way and need calm, comfort and space before being able to tell an adult what has upset them.

We also understand that it is not possible for all families to have a dog, and we hope that this is an opportunity for children to have a 'share' in a dog, gain from this relationship and enjoy contact regularly. With this in mind, we will integrate Jacob widely into school life on the days he is with us; he will attend assembly this week, and children will meet him outside at playtime.

Jacob's main place of residence when he is in the Academy is the Principal's Office, which is secure and separate from the classrooms. In line with our risk assessment and public liability insurance, Jacob is always with an adult when moving around the Academy and on a short lead. Where Jacob is working directly with children, parental permission will be required. Please understand that we do everything we can to reassure children who are worried and that under no circumstances are they forced to meet with him.

Indeed, Jacob is available to work with children (and adults) who have had bad experiences with dogs or other animals. With parental permission, over a period of time children who react fearfully to dogs can be supported in approaching, handling and gaining confidence in managing their fear.

We hope that the children will gain a great deal of enjoyment from getting to know Jacob better and that he becomes an established part of life at both Raleigh and Admirals. Please note that he will be with us only on certain days as he already has commitments to other Schools and Academies across the region. However, should you have any queries or questions on the matter then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



**Mr. Greg Sadler**  
Executive Principal