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| We honour God through our actions | PRIORY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  St Catherine’s Road, St Marychurch,  Torquay, TQ1 4NZ  Telephone: 01803 328480  E-mail: [admin@priory-primary.torbay.sch.uk](mailto:admin@priory.torbay.sch.uk) | Logo  Description automatically generated with medium confidence  Logo  Description automatically generated with medium confidence  A family of schools working together to serve the mission of our Catholic diocese. |

Dear Parents/Carers,

**School Dog**

For some time, Priory have been reaping the benefits of having animals in school, whether this be rearing chickens, caring for a hamster, cultivating butterflies, or welcoming a visiting cat. This has been very beneficial for our children and as such I am writing to let you know that we have also now decided to take on a school dog. This decision has been made following extensive research and discussion with other schools. A full risk assessment has been completed which will be available on our website.

Taco or Taco-bell, as she is also known is a few weeks old and is a Labradoodle belonging to Mr. Hazlewood. Mr Hazlewood has researched and spoken to other schools in the local area who also have school dogs and seen the many benefits of having one.

* Dogs teach children about responsibility – by children having to remember to feed and give water to the dog it can give them a sense of importance and satisfaction that they may not get from other responsibilities.
* Dogs teach children patience – they do not always do as they are told first time!
* Dogs teach children compassion – just like us dogs feel pain and emotion.
* Dogs teach children about socialisation – by the children learning how to interact with a dog they can better learn how to socialise with other children.
* Dogs are fun – they greet you with a wagging tail every day and put a smile on your face, even on a bad day.

A screenshot of a person holding a dog

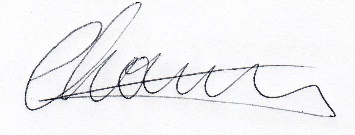
Description automatically generated with medium confidenceTaco will have liability insurance which will mean she will be able to come into the school. She will also have regular visits to the vet for yearly vaccinations, flea and worm treatments.

Taco will be separate from the classrooms and the children will only be able to interact with her under strict supervision and if parental permission has been given. She will initially visit school for a few days before we break up. When she is moving around the school she will be on a lead and always with an adult. We hope she will be able to support children in school in areas such as reading, nurture groups, with attendance and being in the quiet areas on the playground.

With parental permission, children who are fearful of dogs can be supported in approaching, handling and to gain confidence in managing their fear. I am sure the children will gain a lot of enjoyment from having a school dog and there will be pictures on the website of all that she does. I will be arranging for the Dog’s Trust to revisit school to carry out an assembly and/or workshops on how to ‘Be Dog Smart’.

In order to move forward with this, we would be grateful if you could complete and return the attached slip before Monday 19th July. It is planned that Taco will begin to visit Priory from that Monday.

Kind Regards



Miss Cathy Lowry

Executive Head Teacher

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**Please return to Priory before Monday 19th July 2021.**

Please tick as appropriate:

* I am happy for my child to be involved with all aspects of caring for the school dog, including supervised lunchtime walks.
* My child is a little nervous of dogs, but I am happy for him/her to be involved with all aspects of caring for the school dog, including supervised lunchtime walks.
* My child is fearful of dogs, but in time, I would like them to work with the dog to develop their confidence with and understanding dogs.
* My child has an allergy which means they must not be in contact with the dog οr I do not give permission for my child to come into direct contact with the dog.

Name ……………………………………………………………………

Signed ………………………………………………………………….. Parent/Carer