



# Methven Primary School Nursery



## Pet Therapy sessions with 'Mollie' the dog

Through our responsive planning (Children's Voice), several children have expressed an interest in learning about how to look after a dog. We have arranged for Aga's dog 'Mollie' (a friendly, small Shih-tzu) to visit our nursery for 5 days (different day each week for 5 weeks). A comprehensive risk assessment has been completed to ensure the safety of the children and Mollie! Please speak to a member of staff if you have any questions or would like to see the risk assessment.

### Aims of our Pet Therapy sessions

The aim of this initiative is to give our children real life learning opportunities which will help develop skills and understanding of how to show care and compassion. It is also an opportunity for children to gain confidence and resilience around familiar pets.

### Children will have opportunities to:-

- Be motivated towards their learning through a high level of interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment of animals
- Develop confidence and self esteem
- Overcome anxieties about dogs and develop a growth mind-set
- Develop caring attitudes through nurturing approaches
- Take turns and use appropriate behaviours, (being kind and gentle)
- Develop responsibility and empathy towards the dog
- Take responsibility for checking water dish
- Develop social and communication skills
- Learn in a calm environment which the presence of a dog can bring
- Have reduced stress levels through positive experiences around the dog
- Be involved in some practical activities (if they choose) e.g. playing, grooming, giving a treat as a reward

## Benefits of working in partnership with animals

- Animals can help children to feel valued, loved and secure
- Animals can help children build relationships and trust
- Animals can help children to develop resilience and to cope with life events
- Animals can help support children to be responsible and understand about being caring and nurturing
- Animals can help children learn about being safe around them and how to keep animals safe
- Working with animals can build children's knowledge and confidence

The welfare of the dog in nursery is paramount and everyone must follow the guidance in the risk assessment and advice from Aga.

The dog will have opportunities to:-

- Rest and sleep as necessary in the parent's room (in her own cage)
- Go to the toilet at regular intervals
- Have exercise opportunities to remain motivated and reduce anxiety
- Play with toys
- Be comfortable at all times ensuring there is access to drinking water and suitable ventilation



Mollie will be kept in her cage in the parents' room and children will only have access to her when accompanied by an adult. At NO time will children be left alone with Mollie.

**'Mollie'**



**Relevant principles and standards from the 'Health and Social Care Standards' (Scottish Government: 2017)**

Principle: Compassion Standard

2.8 I am supported to communicate in a way that is right for me, at my own pace, by people who are sensitive to my needs.

3.9 I experience warmth, kindness and compassion in how I am supported and cared for, including physical comfort when appropriate for me and the person supporting me.

Principle: Wellbeing Standard

2.24 I make informed choices about the choices and decisions about the risks I take in my daily life and am encouraged to take positive risks that enhance the quality of my life.

4.25 I am confident that people are encouraged to be innovative in the way they support and care for me.

Principle: Responsive care and support

3.18 I am supported and cared for sensitively by people who anticipate issues and are aware of and plan for any known vulnerability or frailty.

Principle: Dignity and respect

3.1 I experience people speaking and listening to me in a way that is courteous and respectful, with my care and support being the main focus.

**Relevant themes from 'How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare?' (Education Scotland: 2016)**

**QI 2.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection**

There are clear, appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure the care and welfare of young children including child protection, safeguarding and risk assessments.

**QI 2.2 Curriculum - Learning and developmental pathways**

We provide a high-quality curriculum framework for children that are very well matched to the stages of development for our children. We carefully promote strong nurturing attachments for children in our care.

**QI 2.2 Curriculum - Skills for life and learning**

Through our highly responsive approach, our children are developing a broad range of skills within motivating and relevant contexts. We very skilfully support children to take forward their own ideas and interests. Together we successfully plan and deliver relevant, real-life opportunities for young children to apply their developing skills.

**QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment**

All children feel valued, safe and secure. As a result, they are successful, confident and responsible. Children contribute effectively to the setting and its community in purposeful and innovative ways. Learning experiences extend and sustain children's interest, help them make decisions and develop their creativity, resilience and independence very well.