



# Durham Lane Primary School

Head Teacher : Mrs J.A.C Ball  
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24th January 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

## Guide Dog Puppy

The school has a long association with Margaret Reed, a local Puppy Trainer for Guide Dogs for the Blind. She currently has a 9 week old labrador puppy, Willow. One of her really important roles is to help puppies to be calm and appropriate around various groups of children and adults. Margaret has asked if she can stand on our playground in the mornings over the next few weeks holding Willow. Simply to get her used to crowds and the general hubbub before school. Although, as you know, for dogs' and children's safety, we don't allow dogs onto the playground, I have agreed to this as it is a vital part of Willow's training. Willow will be held by Margaret at all times and we ask that people do not go over and pet her, as this would not be appropriate. All of the children have been told that they may look from a distance, but may not go close or try to pet Willow. Thank you for your support.

## Severe Weather Plan

I just wanted to remind you about the school's stance in cases of severe weather. We will always endeavour to keep our school open, whatever the weather; we value every day that the children spend in school and also know that many of you need to get to your own workplaces. Over the last 16 years we have only allowed snow to close us twice!

We would only close if:

- Insufficient numbers of staff could get here. We have teachers travelling from Darlington and Middlesbrough as well as more locally, but **all** our staff will always try to get here.
- The weather has caused some sort of damage to the building or grounds that causes a Health and Safety issue.
- We are advised to close by Stockton Borough Council or the police.

Should we have to close, I would follow protocol by informing the council who would immediately place this information on their website [www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk) (search under School Closures). If possible, we would also put it on our website and on Twitter. I would always aim to give as much notice as possible, but I'm sure you'll appreciate that it's only once staff start to travel that they really know how severe a disruption may be. In addition, if there was a problem with the building, we would only know after Mr. McMillan has started his morning checks after 7.30am.

We know that children (and adults!) love to play in the snow and we wouldn't want to stop this, particularly as we don't get it very often. If it is snowy, please do send in warm coats wellies, gloves, hats, scarves etc. so that we can actually take the children into the snow to enjoy extending their learning outside. If they do arrive in wellies, please can you send a change of shoes as wellies are uncomfortable if worn all day. To avoid the children sitting in wet clothes all day, we tend to stay in at playtimes, but allow the children out to play in the snow in the afternoon, just before they come home.

## Winter Gritting Plan

Clearly, it would be impossible for us to grit the entire grounds, so for your safety please keep to the gritted areas. We all know that increased traffic improves the efficiency of grit, so please be extra vigilant if you are one of the first on the paths and playground. We are not allowed to grit areas outside of school, so please be careful on the paths which lead to school.

As with other years, if the conditions on the playground are treacherous, we will not open the playground at all and we will take Reception, Class 1 and Class 2 children through the front entrance and Classes 3 – 6 through the side door (by the ICT suite) that we don't usually use (if we can get past the problem paved area). When this happens, parents and carers will not be permitted in through these doors as the cloakroom areas will be too busy; staff will be outside and will take any messages for teachers. The Nursery entrance will open as usual for Nursery children.

Please just be patient as we may have to change what we do depending on conditions at the time.

### **Gritting Plan**

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. J.A.C. Ball  
Head Teacher