



## St Wilfrid's CE Primary School

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Headteacher: Miss Lauren Cousin

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Assistant Headteacher: Mrs Francesca McCoulough

Business Manager: Mrs Joanne Porter

***'Learning and Growing Together; Living Life in all its Fullness'***

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Dear parents/carers,

### **Parent Communication – Introduction of School Therapy Dog**

We are writing to inform you that St Wilfrid's CE Primary School will soon be introducing a school dog as part of our ongoing work to support pupil wellbeing, emotional regulation and positive behaviour.

The dog, Bearnie Bear, is owned by Mrs Streets and he is a Cavapoo, a breed chosen specifically for its calm, friendly and gentle temperament. Cavapoos are often used as therapy dogs because they are small, affectionate and generally well suited to working with children.

We are very aware that some children may feel nervous or afraid of dogs. Please be reassured that:

- No child will ever be required to interact with Bearnie
- Children who are uncomfortable will be fully supported and alternative arrangements will always be in place
- Bearnie will be kept in a controlled environment and will not roam the school alone

Bearnie will be based in the Den with Mrs Streets or Miss Cousin's office and will always be with Mrs Streets and on a lead as the trained and designated handler. Children will only visit Bearnie Bear with adult supervision and as part of a planned activity, such as:

- Emotional regulation or calming support
- Wellbeing or SEND interventions
- A quiet reward or positive behaviour incentive

Interaction with him will be optional and will take place in short, carefully managed sessions. Parental consent will be sought before any planned involvement.

Research and experience show that therapy dogs can have many positives for children, including:

- Supporting emotional regulation and reducing anxiety
- Encouraging calm behaviour and focus
- Building confidence, empathy and responsibility
- Providing comfort and reassurance for some children

The dog's welfare, pupil safety and hygiene will be carefully managed at all times in line with school policy and risk assessments – both of which can be seen on request.

If you have any questions, concerns, allergies or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Cousin