

PAT School Visit Agreement

Pets As Therapy brings regular animal companionship to people in hospitals, hospices, nursing homes and prison and fosters reading confidence in children in schools with or through visits from volunteers and their registered, temperament-tested pets.

Launched in 2010, Read2Dogs is a scheme developed to help children gain confidence in reading.

Some school children find reading in front of their classmates and teacher daunting and can become nervous and stressed, however when a PAT Dog enters the group, they often become less stressed and self-conscious, relaxing as the dogs are non-judgemental. PAT Dogs provide comfort, encourage positive social behaviours, enhance self-esteem, motivate speech and inspire young people to have fun. It has been proven to help children gain confidence and they enjoy and benefit greatly from the reading experience.

Our PAT teams can only visit schools that are registered with us.

PAT Volunteer Team Visits – Summary terms and conditions

Pets As Therapy asks that the establishments agree to ensure that our volunteers and their PAT pets are treated with respect and dignity during their visits. They are bound by our PAT policies and procedures.

They should never be asked to contravene these or put their PAT pets or themselves at risk in any way.

Our volunteers are aware that you, as a school accepting our service, may require further references, special police checks, or occupational health interviews and they have declared that they will abide by your policies and procedures if they commit to visiting there.

Please make sure that you give our volunteer your Health and Safety and Fire procedures and any other regulations that you might require them to follow.

- PAT volunteers will bring one registered PAT pet only on each visit. Our volunteers are not insured to visit with an unregistered pet or multiple animals.
- Establishments must make the PAT volunteer aware of all Health and Safety procedures and regulations that they are required to follow.
- In the interest of animal welfare, each PAT Volunteer visit must be no longer than 2 hours.
- The Establishment should nominate a designated member of their staff as a point of contact to direct and support our volunteer.
- PAT Volunteer Teams must be supervised by a member of the establishment's staff at all times during their active visits and never left alone with a recipient.
- PAT Volunteers are instructed to refuse unsupervised situations and remove themselves from any visit situation where supervision is inadequate.
- The PAT Volunteer will keep their PAT dog on a lead at all times to ensure that they have control of their pet in any circumstances.

- The PAT volunteer and their pet must display the correct photographic PAT ID badges as issued by the Charity, these must be worn in addition to any security badges you may require them to wear.
- The Establishment must check that the PAT volunteer's badge is still in date and valid. Volunteers with old badges are no longer covered by PAT insurance.

Read2Dogs Visits

- The students will be selected by their teachers as those who would benefit most from this intervention; normally young people who lack confidence or have difficulty with reading or attention deficit. The teacher chooses and provides appropriate books.
- Teachers are in charge and in attendance constantly during Pets As Therapy visits.
- It is suggested that the sessions for each young person should be no longer than 15 minutes.
- The PAT Dog is taken into a classroom is under the control of the PAT Volunteer, who initially introduce themselves and their PAT Dog – his name, breed, age and what they enjoy, and a little about them being a special visitor. The students are also told how much the dog enjoys hearing stories and spending time with people.
- The PAT Volunteer holds their PAT Dog on a lead at all times, but the pupil(s) should be allowed to sit close so they can interact with the dog.

There is also the option for children to learn how to care for a pet, how to behave around animals for example, in a Therapy & Nurture visit, promoting social skills and confidence both in and outside of school.

Pets As Therapy is a charity registered in England & Wales number 1112194 and in Scotland number SC038910.

We are a company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales, number 5311186, registered office:

Hampden House,
Monument Business Park,
Warpsgrove Lane,
Chalgrove,
Oxfordshire, OX44 7RW.

Pets As Therapy is a fully self-supporting charity. We rely solely on the hard work of our visiting volunteers, the generosity of fundraisers and the support of corporate sponsors.

RISK ASSESSMENT

IDENTIFYING THE RISK	RISK RATING	CONTROL MEASURES	OUTCOME
COVID-19 - Contact with others	Medium/ Low	PAT volunteer and establishment must adhere to the latest government COVID-19 guidelines at all times. Establishments must undertake a risk assessment for volunteers signed by whomever is responsible for the implementation of COVID-19 precautions in the establishment and by the volunteer. If the establishment has additional testing or PPE requirements, they must supply to the volunteer. If PAT volunteer returns a positive test, they must cease visiting for 10 days, no visits can be undertaken during this time. The PAT volunteer must inform their establishment if they return a positive test.	Low
Risk of spreading virus or bacterial infection via contact with PAT Pet	Low	Members of staff, students and pupils must observe normal hygiene measures when handling the PAT pet i.e. wash/sanitise their hands before and after contact with a PAT pet. The PAT volunteer must ensure that there is no 'casual' contact with their pet as they move around the school. This will help minimise the risk of transmission of any unwanted pathogens.	Low
Hygiene issues from dogs Allergies to dogs Animal bites, scratches and animal parasites	Low	Only registered Pets As Therapy Dogs to be involved as they are vaccinated, wormed and flea protected in accordance with Pets As Therapy Policy. Child to use hand gel/wash hands after touching dog. Handler to ensure dog has opportunity to relieve itself outside school premises. PAT volunteer to have access via alternative door and to avoid walking through the school. All pupils having contact with a dog to have written parental consent	Low
Pupils being left unaccompanied during the session.	Low	Parents/Guardians of all pupils participating must have given consent and the school undertakes that a member of staff will always be present leading the session.	Low
Pupils may have behavioural problems	Medium	Clear expectations for behaviour explained to pupils in advance of visit. The PAT volunteer must have control of the dog at all times and dog is to be kept on lead which must be held by the volunteer. If the PAT volunteer or school is concerned about the behaviour of pupils towards the PAT dog, they may end the visit at any time, both parties should discuss how to improve for future visits.	Low
Members of staff inexperienced around dogs	Low	Pets As Therapy Volunteer will control the dog at all times in accordance with the Pets As Therapy volunteer handbook.	Low
Fear of dog harming child	Low	Staff present to supervise children at all times. Child instructed and supervised how to approach dog by the Pets As Therapy volunteer.	Low

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Pets As Therapy acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and Charity Commission requirements.

This policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children have a positive and enjoyable experience in a safe and child centred environment and are protected from abuse whilst participating in an activity with a Pets As Therapy Volunteer.

Pets As Therapy acknowledges that some children, including disabled children, young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our safeguarding children policy Pets As Therapy will:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people. This forms part of the memorandum with establishments.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of reported incidents/concerns of abuse when reported and support provided to the individual/s that raise or disclose the concern.
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Ensure robust safeguarding reporting mechanisms to the local safeguarding children leads are in operation and concerns are reported without delay.
- The Board reserves the right to liaise with the host establishment and the Disclosure and Barring Service at any time with regards to any Volunteer of the Charity or for any applicant who applies to be a Volunteer or Employee of the Charity.
- No Volunteer is accepted into the Charity unless at least two written references have been obtained certifying that the applicant is of good character. References are obtained from a person independent of the applicant and are checked by the Charity in the event of any doubt either directly with their signatories or, if doubt remains, with the police.
- No PAT Volunteer visit may be made on behalf of the Charity to any child in the care of an establishment **without the presence of a member of the Establishment's staff in attendance at all times.**
- Only PAT Volunteer visits with animals registered with the Charity and made on behalf of Pets As Therapy are covered by Pets As Therapy's third-party insurance.