

24th April 2024

Dear parent/carers

I am writing to let you know that Lealands High School has decided to adopt two school rabbits to support the students in the Student Support Department. The rabbits (Sonny and Storm) will belong to Mrs E Strachan, KS3 Learning Support Assistant Team leader and she will be the main point of contact for any questions. The rabbits will grow up in the school environment becoming fully accustomed to the routines of the day and supportive of students within the school. As we are a school and only open during term times, rabbits will live in the school during the week and a member of staff will take them home on weekends and school holidays.

We have undertaken a significant amount of research and have visited other schools who have school rabbits. The benefits to having school rabbits are that they:

- Have a calming effect on pupils, particularly those with behavioural or learning difficulties
- Encouraging expression and participation in more withdrawn children and foster a sense of responsibility
- Increase enthusiasm for and enjoyment of school which will motivate the students to think and learn
- Teaching students to nurture and respect life
- Help work undertaken with the most vulnerable students and support educational improvements with low achievers
- Help students build confidence in reading;
- Improve attendance

The young rabbits currently live with Mrs Strachan and her family and will be introduced to the school environment and students gradually. The rabbits will have an annual temperament test completed by veterinary specialists and have a full vaccination programme. The rabbits' main place of residence will be in the Student Support in a large rabbit hutch attached to a pen area for the rabbits to move around freely.

The school rabbit policy is on the school website as is a full risk assessment, which will be reviewed annually. If at any point it comes to light that the rabbits do not actively enjoy life in the school environment, then they will no longer attend. It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all students but that for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits.

Due to ongoing costs we are looking to have students, parents and carers, local companies and individuals volunteer to support this initiative. Students are holding regular fundraising events throughout the year to help with the costs such as cake sales in school and sponsored activities.

Here is a list of essential items for basic rabbit care:

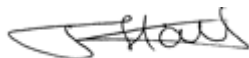
- Bedding materials
- Litter trays and fillings
- Toys
- Blankets for students to put on their laps
- Rabbit-safe cleaning products
- Pet insurance
- Vet plan
- Leafy greens to feed it
- Hay

As we are a school and only open during term times, we will have to accumulate multiples of the items above as the rabbits will live in the school during the week and a member of staff will take the rabbit home on weekends and school holidays. Please could I ask if you are able to support this intervention by making any donations (financial or resources listed above), please can you contact us on admin@lealands.luton.sch.uk or on 01582 611600.

Any parent / carer who **does not** wish their child to have the opportunity to interact with the rabbits are invited to inform us. If your child has allergies or is afraid of rabbits, we would be very grateful if you could complete the [google form](#) and we will ensure that your child does not come into contact with Sonny and Storm.

If you do have any queries or would like further information, please contact us at the school address.

Yours sincerely



Mr Hall
Assistant Headteacher