

THE BEST THERAPIST HAS FUR AND FOUR LEGS



Smyrna Elementary Therapy Dog Handbook



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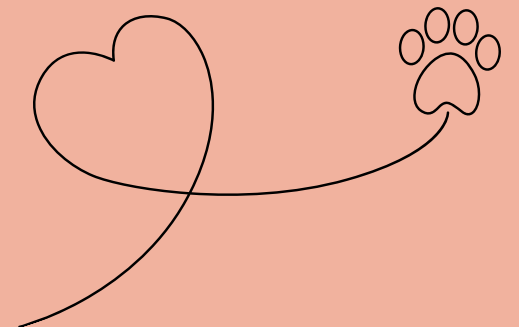
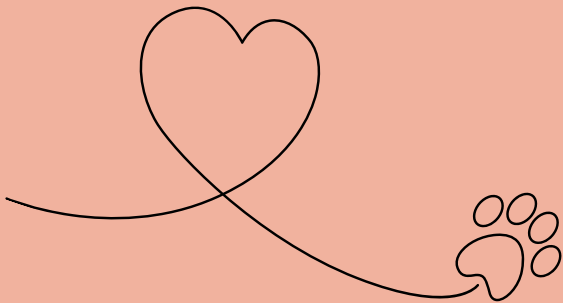
What is a Therapy Dog?

Selected initially for their temperament, therapy dogs undergo training with their handlers, typically by reputable therapy dog organizations. This training helps them become calm and obedient, allowing them to offer emotional support, comfort, and companionship to people in educational, healthcare, and community environments.



Purpose

The presence of a certified therapy dog at Smyrna Elementary is aimed at enhancing the overall environment and achievement of our students. Research has shown that having a therapy dog at school can lead to improved academic performance, positive behavior, increased confidence, a greater enthusiasm for learning, and a higher attendance rate among students.



Policy

- Rebels' certifications will be displayed in our office for parents and/or guardians to view.
- Parents and/or guardians must complete a release form in order for Rebel to visit their child's classroom independently.
- If a parent/guardian indicates "no" on the release form, the handler, Missy Wilson, will contact them to discuss Rebel's role at Smyrna Elementary.
- If the parent/guardian still does not allow Rebel to interact with their child, measures will be taken to ensure minimal contact between Rebel and the student.
- Students will be educated on Rebel's rules to promote safety for all parties involved.
- Students are reminded to wash their hands after petting or feeding Rebel treats to promote good hygiene.



Rebel Chase – Smyrna Elementary School Therapy Dog Permission Slip



Student Name: _____ Grade/Teacher: _____

Dear Parent/Guardians,

We would like to inform you that your child's school, Smyrna Elementary School, has the unique opportunity of having a certified therapy dog on staff. Therapy dogs receive extensive training to provide students and the school community with emotional support, positive impacts on learning, and much more. This permission slip allows for your input regarding your child's participation and contact with our therapy dog, Rebel Chase.

I understand that my child may have incidental or student-initiated contact with the school therapy dog. I understand that Rebel Chase, school therapy dog, may be in my child's classroom during the school day. I understand that this permission slip form will remain "active" during the years my child attends Smyrna Elementary School. If I should change my mind regarding my child's interaction and participation with Rebel Chase, I understand I must provide this in writing to the school office.

☐ Yes, my child may have incidental and/or initiated contact with the Smyrna Elementary School Therapy Dog, Rebel Chase, during the years that my child is enrolled at Smyrna Elementary School

☐ No, my child may NOT have contact with the school therapy dog, Rebel Chase.

Due to: ☐ Allergies ☐ Fear of Dogs ☐ Other

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have any questions please contact Melissa Wilson @ 302-653-8588 or
melissa.wilson@smyrna.k12.de.us

Service and Benefits

Research shows that having a therapy dog at school has the following benefits:

- Reduce Negative Behaviors
- Promote Prosocial Behaviors
- Positive Learning Outcomes
- Increase Well-Being

Additional, scientifically proven, benefits of therapy dogs for students include promoting production and regulation of:

- Oxytocin
 - A hormone associated with positive emotions, bonding, and calmness. Sometimes referred to as our “feel-good” hormone.
- Serotonin
 - A neurotransmitter that regulates activities such as mood, behavior, and memory
 - Normal or increased levels of serotonin can result in students feeling:
 - More focused
 - Emotionally stable
 - Happier
 - Calmer
- Cortisol
 - Known as the body’s stress hormone. Cortisol helps to regulate the body’s stress response, fight or flight, immune functioning, and more.



Services provided

Examples of services provided by Rebel Chase

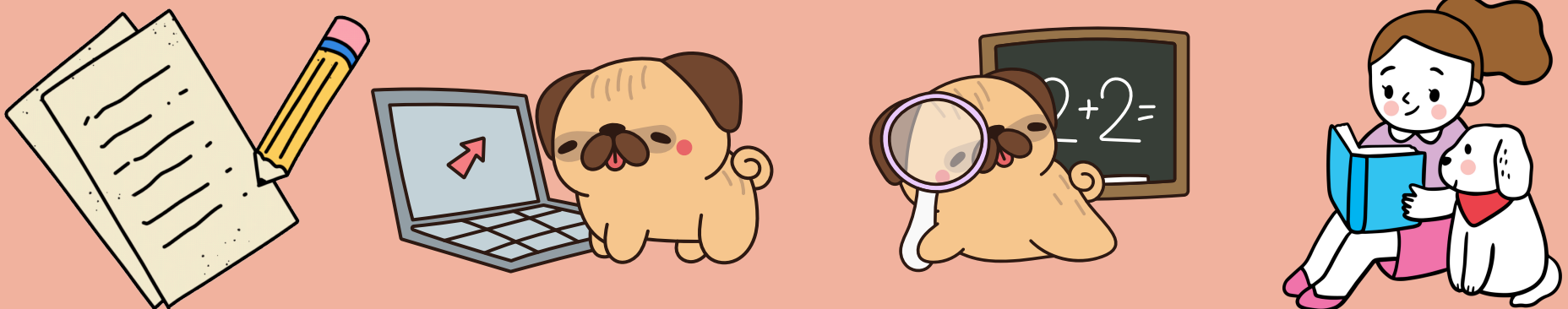
Examples of activities that students may engage in with a therapy dog include petting and/or hugging the dog, speaking to the dog, and giving the dog simple commands that the dog is trained to respond to.

Additionally, Rebel will enter into classrooms to help with academics such as reading, math, writing prompts and sentences, and lay with them as they work independently on their chromebooks.

He has been certified to assist in occupational therapy with the students who receive that service.

Rebel does nose work in education. This skill enhances the learning of our students in the classroom through centers, whole group instruction, and more.

The possibilities are endless!



Rebels Resume

Basic Dog Training

Completed on August 8, 2022

Therapy Dog Training

Passed on November 3, 2022

Animal Assisted Activities

Passed on September 6, 2024

Animal Assisted Education

Passed on September 6, 2024

Animal Assisted Therapy

Passed on October 4, 2024



Rebel's training completed at
Training Tails of Clayton
www.training-tails.com
by Danielle Summers
302-900-1248



References

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