

Doggy Chillin Reading with Dogs Programme



Valuing others that they value themselves.

Doggy Chillin offers a variety of courses that introduces a dog into the learning environment. This helps to create a calm and relaxed atmosphere where students can flourish and enhanced learning takes place. All our courses are flexible and can be tailored according to the age and needs of the pupil.

What is it?

Our Reading with Dogs programme is aimed at reducing anxiety around reading, boosting self-esteem and promoting enjoyment for reading. These relaxed and fun sessions can be tailored depending on the age of pupils, size of groups and any additional support needs.

What do we offer?

We provide a 10 week course of up to 3 hours per week. Week one is our mandatory dog safety course, where we teach the children how to interact safely with a dog. Generally, this would be taught to the whole school so that when we bring our Doggy Chillin trained dog into the school all the pupils know how to approach the dog safely. During weeks 2 to 10 the pupils come along to a specifically allocated classroom in the school where they would have the opportunity to read to the dog. The children can bring their own books, or one from Doggy Chillin's own library of carefully chosen books.

The size and nature of each group will be determined by the school. We have found that the younger ones feel more comfortable in larger groups of up to four pupils. Older children tend to respond better smaller groups or one to one. The length of each session is decided by the school. We have found that 15 to 20 minutes per group works well.

At the start of the programme, Doggy Chillin staff will agree with the school their priorities for the course. This will form the basis of assessments of the pupils to determine any progress and will be handed to the school at the end of the programme.

The emphasis on the lessons is to make them informal to help the children relax. Having a dog in the room changes the focus from the pupil to the dog, and when the pupils are calm they can call the dog over to pat it. Once the dog settles the children get to read to it and stroke it whilst they read. If a child feels uncertain about the dog being in the room we can change the dynamics to help the pupil feel more comfortable. We have found that even when children are unsure about having a dog being too close to them they still like having it in the room, though at a safe distance. Even when having a dog in the room still creates an issue for the pupil we have a large cuddly toy dog that they can hold.

What is the evidence that this works?

Feedback from both staff and pupils said that when the children read to the dog, it calmed them down and reduced their anxiety around reading. The children looked forward to the sessions and enjoyed taking part in them. When the pupils became more relaxed their reading improved and their confidence grew to such an extent that they were more prepared to read in class, and in some

For more information, contact Colum Scriven at Doggy Chillin:

Email: colum@doggychillin.co.uk or phone 07806 814 790.

Doggy Chillin Reading with Dogs Programme

cases at home. Some teachers reported that their pupils became more engaged in their lessons as well.

Our experience in the classroom is supported by a growing body of anecdotal evidence on the benefits of reading to a dog. The BBC covered a news story from Inverness, and both the Paisley Daily Express and STV Glasgow wrote reports on our programme, links shown below:

Paisley Daily Express article

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/meet-ienna-dog-trained-help-10064358>

STV Glasgow interview

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_Vz0VqcyDI

What do we charge?

Doggy Chillin CIC is a social enterprise whose profits go to back to the community, in this case into working with young people to provide them with more opportunities. The charges cover the costs of our staff hours so that we can provide a quality service. Our courses are flexible and can be adjusted to the school's or pupil's needs. Here are some suggestions of formats with their costs:

Item¹	Cost
Single lesson	£120
Half a day (max 3 hours)	£240
Full day (max 5 hours)	£390
10 week programme²	
Up to 1 hour per week	£1,000
Up to 2 hours per week	£1,500
Up to 3 hours per week	£2,000

¹ Assumes pupils have taken part in prerequisite "Safety Around Dogs" course, which costs £120.

² Week 1 is "Safety Around Dogs course". Weeks 2 to 10 are reading weeks.

For more information, contact Colum Scriven at Doggy Chillin:

Email: colum@doggychillin.co.uk or phone 07806 814 790.