

Understanding and Caring for Dogs Course



Valuing others that they value themselves.

Doggy Chillin offers a variety of courses that introduce a dog into the educational 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 Understanding and Caring for Dogs course is aimed at young people from the age of 14 and above. We teach them about the nature of our dogs, and how to have a better relationship with them. We create a collaborative learning community to promote positive ways of communicating and boost self-confidence. Work experience is provided which supports the skills and knowledge attained on the course. The course content can be linked in with the educational establishment's existing accreditation programmes.

What do we offer?

We provide approximately 40 hours of learning, self-study, and work experience for a maximum of 12 students per course. Week one is our mandatory Safety Around Dogs course, where we teach the young people 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 (and staff) know how to approach it safely.

The course content is based upon the Amichien Bonding Method as developed by the international Dog Listener, Jan Fennell, and has been adapted to a classroom environment. We provide the pupils with invaluable information that will help them to have a better relationship with their own dog or with dogs that they know. The young person can share that knowledge with other dog owners, thereby boosting their own self-esteem as others look to them for help.

Each session builds on the students' existing knowledge, uses group based learning, tutor input, video study, one-to-one support, and practical exercises (often working with the Doggy Chillin trained dog). Students are encouraged to reflect their learning through artwork, making handouts or PowerPoint presentations. Every pupil is assigned a Doggy Chillin tutor and issued with a student pack that contains the content of the course and exercise sheets for them to fill out during the course. At the end of each section the pupil and tutor will complete a pupil feedback form that the pupil can use as evidence of progress or skills learnt.

Where possible students will be encouraged to do their own self-study. This could be linked in with the school's own programmes, for example English or literacy and art. Work that the pupils complete can be used to fulfil the school's requirements.

At the end of the course, work experience is provided for each pupil in a placement that uses the same method with dogs that is taught on the course. This reinforces the learning that they obtain on the course and provides them with practical examples of how Jan Fennell's method works with dogs. Depending upon the location of the placement and its availability, the number of sessions will

For more information, contact Colum Scriven at Doggy Chillin:

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

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vary from a single visit to a total of three. Students will be accompanied by school staff and Doggy Chillin tutors.

Currently there is no formal accreditation provided for the course, though Doggy Chillin is looking to work with an educational establishment willing to support the process. The format of the content has been designed that it can be slotted into the school's accreditation process. The figure of 40 hours has been nominally selected to comply with SQA requirements.

What is the evidence that this works?

Following the successful piloting of the course in a Renfrewshire school, staff reported that pupils were much calmer following each lesson. Comments included that the students showed enthusiasm to attend the class, and in one instance, a pupil showed empathy who had never shown that emotion before. In one particular example, a student arrived at the class in an agitated state, ready to react at the slightest provocation. The pupil was invited to take the Doggy Chillin dog for a walk, with a tutor, and practice a specific exercise used for training dogs. The pupil returned 15 minutes later in a much calmer frame of mind.

The feedback from pupils was very positive. They said that they enjoyed the course and had successfully used some of the techniques with their own dogs. In relation to the work experience, one pupil said that they felt that they were in "doggy heaven".

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:

Item ¹	Cost
Single lesson	£120
Half a day (max 3 hours)	£240
Full day (max 5 hours)	£390
Understanding and caring for dogs²	
40 hours, maximum of 12 students per course	£5,500

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

² Week 1 is "Safety Around Dogs course". Remaining weeks are Understanding Dogs course.

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