

Wednesday 2nd September 2026

RE: Information for families – Academic Year 2026–27

Dear Parents and Carers,

Jaffle, our school dog, has been part of Ashdon Primary School since January 2025. He is a smooth-haired Miniature Dachshund, he attends four days a week during term time, and he is based in my office. I am both his owner and his handler. Jaffle's main role is to listen to children read at break and lunchtime. Children who feel nervous reading aloud to an adult often find it much easier to read to a dog, and we have seen real gains in confidence as a result.

How reading sessions work

From September 2026 we are moving from an opt-in consent slip to an opt-out arrangement. This means:

- Your child may take part in supervised reading sessions with Jaffle unless you tell us that you would rather they did not.
- You do not need to return anything if you are happy for your child to take part.
- **If you would prefer your child not to read to Jaffle, please email the school office. No reason is needed and none will be asked for.**
- You can change your mind at any point in the year, in either direction, by contacting the office.

Children who do not take part are offered an alternative reading activity at the same time. This is presented in exactly the same way as any other reading choice, so that no child is singled out.

Allergies and anxiety around dogs

Please tell us if your child has a dog allergy or is anxious or frightened around dogs, even if you have told us before. We ask every year because these things change.

- Where a child has a declared dog allergy, we write an individual Dog Allergy Management Plan with the family. An anonymised example is published on our website.
- No child is ever required or encouraged to interact with Jaffle.
- All classrooms, the dining area, the library and the IT suite are permanent dog-free zones.

Safety

Jaffle is always accompanied by a named adult handler and is never left alone with a child. He is fully vaccinated, regularly health-checked, and insured, including third-party public liability cover. A full risk assessment was approved by our Full Governing Body on 22nd October 2026 and is published on the school website.

Questions

If you would like to talk any of this through, please contact the school office on 01799 584219 or admin@ashdon.essex.sch.uk, or come and speak to me directly. I am very happy to discuss it.

With best wishes,



Mrs M Reynecke-Raybould

Headteacher