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18 September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

## School Bearded Dragon

I am writing to let you know that Greenacre Academy has decided to house a school bearded dragon. This decision has been made following extensive research, discussion with other schools that have a school reptile and approval of the Governing Body. A full risk assessment has been completed which will be available on our website.

I would like to introduce you to Bart, a 6-year-old leatherback bearded dragon. Bart belongs to Miss Delf-Smith, who is our Head of Science.

Bearded dragons are an especially good choice for a science department and are highly social and friendly creatures. They are docile, gentle and are very responsive to people.

Miss Delf-Smith has researched and seen the many benefits of having a school pet such as a bearded dragon:

- **Pets teach young people about responsibility** – by children having to remember to feed and give water to the pet it can give them a sense of importance and satisfaction that they may not get from other responsibilities.
- **Pets teach young people compassion** – just like us, animals feel pain and emotion.
- **Pets teach young people about socialisation and kindness** – by the children learning how to interact with a pet they can better learn how to socialise with other children.
- **Pets are fun** – they can be funny and are interesting to observe.
- **Pets build self-esteem** – Helping to take care of a pet gives young people a sense of pride and accomplishment. Studies have shown that children with pets have higher levels of self-esteem than those without pets.
- **Pets bring new ways to learn** – Pets can help to bring learning to life and enrich the classroom learning experience.

In addition to the benefits of a general school pet, a bearded dragon in the classroom can be a great teaching tool. Learning opportunities are vast, they can be used to help captivate student's interests in subjects such as biology, geography and conservation. Bearded dragons can be used to show adaptations to the environment, biodiversity and behavioural patterns, linking with the genetics strand of the National Curriculum.



In the USA, bearded dragons are commonly used as therapy animals in schools due to their slow moving and predictable nature. Students are able to easily become involved in care such a handling, bathing and feeding the dragon and this can be used as a motivator in the classroom.

With parental permission, over a period of time, students who are fearful of reptiles can be supported in approaching, handling and in gaining confidence in managing their fear. Please complete the sheet below by Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023 and send in with your son/ward to school to give to his form tutor.

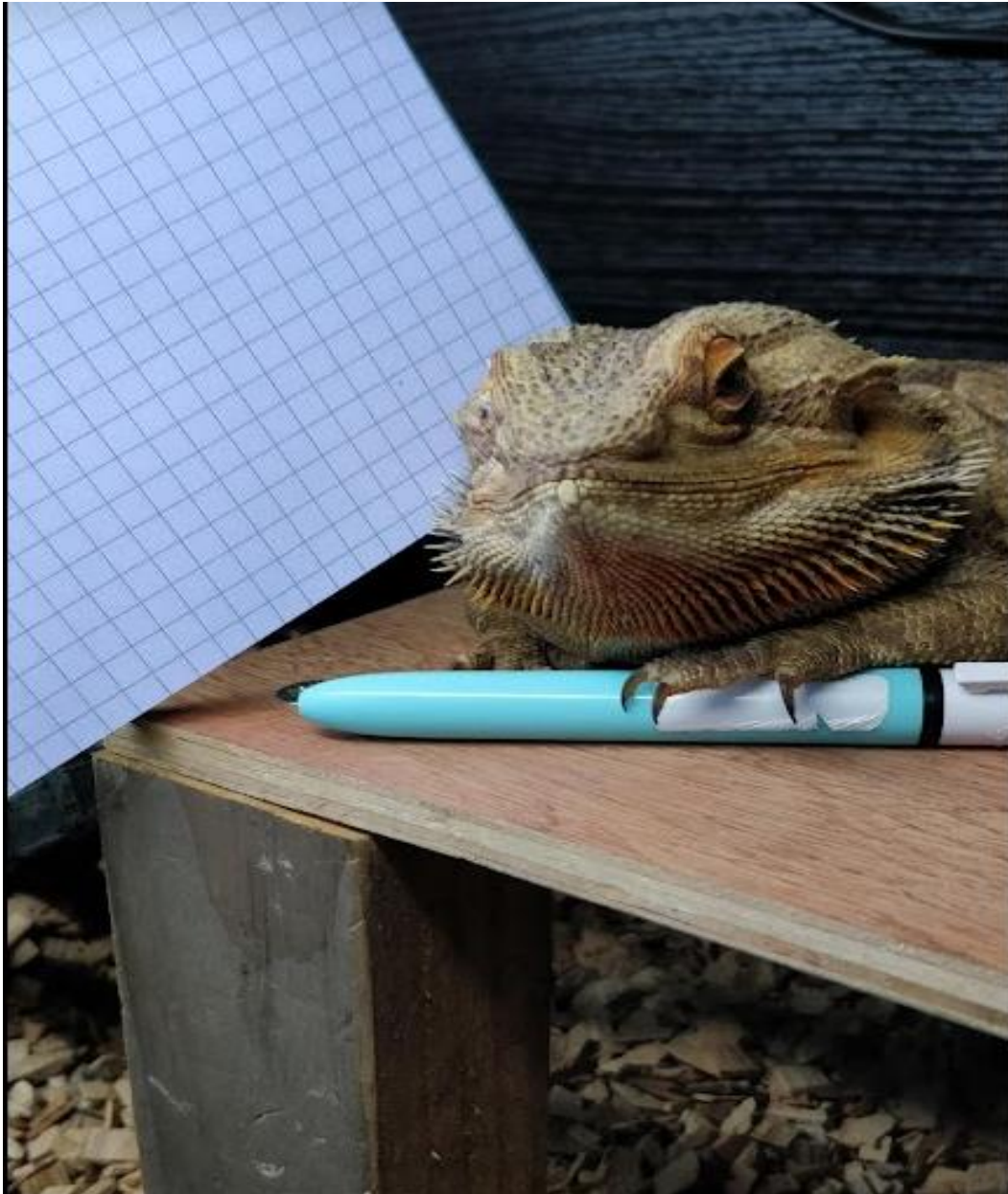
I hope the students will gain a lot of enjoyment from having a school bearded dragon.

Yours sincerely



**Mrs Bridger**  
**Headteacher**

Meet Bart, our bearded dragon!



## Reply Slip: School Bearded Dragon Permission

Name of child/children:

Name	Year and form tutor group

Please tick as appropriate:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I am happy for my son/ward to be involved with all aspects of caring for the school bearded dragon in supervision with a relevant adult</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>My son/ward is a little nervous of bearded dragons, but I am happy for them to be involved with all aspects of caring for the school bearded dragon in supervision with relevant staff.</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>My son/ward is fearful of bearded dragons, but in time, I would like them to work with the bearded dragon to develop their confidence and understanding of reptiles.</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>My son/ward has an allergy which means they must not come into contact with the bearded dragon.</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I <b>do not</b> give permission for my child to come into direct contact with the bearded dragon.</li></ul>	

Parent/Carer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(parent/carer)

PLEASE RETURN BACK TO SCHOOL BY FRIDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021.  
THANK YOU.