

Dear Charger Families,

The Central High School counseling department strives to build a positive climate and culture for students and facilitate their growth both academically and personally. We're excited to inform you of the newest member within the counseling department. Bear is a certified therapy dog, and is owned by Rachel Fulton, one of the counselors.

Bear received his certification through Pet Partners in June 2023 and meets Keller ISD's requirements for having a therapy dog at school. In order to obtain this certification, Bear and/or Mrs. Fulton had to meet the following requirements:

- Online handler's courses and assessment
- In-person evaluation
- Veterinarian approval for temperament
- Up-to-date vaccinations

Bear will accompany Mrs. Fulton 2-3 days a week and will help build relationships with students. Research has shown that therapy dogs help reduce symptoms of stress, increase positive emotions, promote positive attitudes toward learning, and encourage prosocial behaviors and facilitate social interactions with others. Here are some examples of activities Bear might do while on campus:

- Visit classrooms upon teacher request (e.g. read with students)
- Greet students in the hallway
- Attend special events such as pep rallies

While it seems that many students are ecstatic about having a dog at school, it's likely that others will be more hesitant or even afraid. Please be aware that no student is obligated to interact with Bear. Students will be encouraged to wash their hands after petting to avoid the spread of dander. Under rare circumstances, students with severe allergies may need different accommodations. If your child has allergies, or you do not wish to have your child interact with Bear for any reason, please don't hesitate to contact Mrs. Fulton directly at Rachel.Fulton@kellerisd.net.

If you want to stay up to date on Bear's shenanigans, you can follow him on Instagram at @bearybestcounselor. Bear will make his first Central appearance at Meet the Chargers on August 12th so make sure you stop by and say hello.

Please see the attached FAQ regarding Bear. If you have any concerns, please reach out to Mrs. Fulton.

Sincerely,

CHS Counseling Department



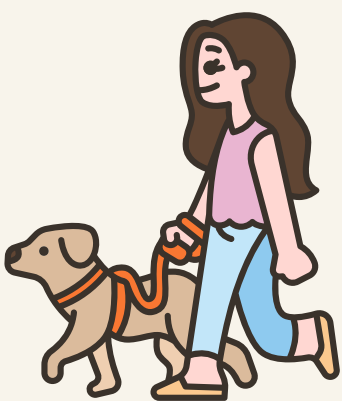
FAQ ABOUT BEAR

WHO IS BEAR?

Bear is a two year old Labradoodle (hypoallergenic). He will spend most of his time (up to three days a week) at TBD but may make guest appearances within the district. When he is not at school, Bear lives with Mrs. Fulton, her husband, and two kids (6 and 11). His birthday is May 23rd and he loves cuddling, playing, and treats!

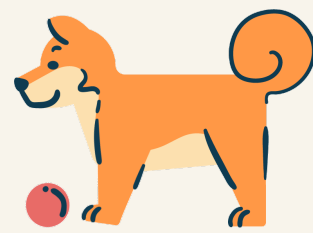
WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE WITH ALLERGIES?

Although no dog is 100% hypoallergenic, Bear does not shed, which presents less pet dander. Before Bear comes to school he is bathed and/or brushed to reduce any dander that might be present. Mrs. Fulton will encourage students to wash their hands after interacting with Bear. Remember, no student is obligated to interact with Bear. Please reach out to Mrs. Fulton if you have any allergy concerns.



WHAT IS BEAR'S TRAINING?

Bear did a six weeks basic manners course through Lucky Dog Training in Keller and graduated in November 2022. He and Mrs. Fulton passed their handler evaluation through Pet Partners in June 2023 and his certificates are in the counseling office. Pet Partners requires that teams (both handler and pet) be re-evaluated every two years to continue with their certifications.



WHAT DOES BEAR DO AT SCHOOL?

Bear will have many different jobs at Central High School. He is available for pets in the morning, between passing periods, and dismissal. He will work with Mrs. Fulton as a therapy dog. He can help students with emotional regulation and establishing relationships. He will also have special visits with students in the classroom upon the request of teachers.

MY CHILD IS AFRAID OF DOGS. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Please let Mrs. Fulton know if your child has an aversion to dogs. She will work with the rest of the counseling staff to ensure that all of our students and staff feel safe. That is a primary focus of this program.



CAN I STOP BY AND SEE BEAR ANYTIME I WANT TO IN THE COUNSELING OFFICE?

Students are encouraged to say hi to Bear if they are in the counseling office. However, students will be expected to be in class on time and will not be given a pass to class if they stop by on their own time.