

**PORT JEFFERSON SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
550 SCRAGGY HILL ROAD
PORT JEFFERSON, NY 11777
PHONE (631)791-4291 FAX (631)476-4428**



Jessica Schmettan
Superintendent of Schools

Christine Austen
Assistant Superintendent
Curriculum and Instruction

March 15, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are pleased to announce that the Port Jefferson School District will pilot a Therapy Dog program at the elementary school to begin in April 2021. The purpose of the pilot program is to investigate whether the District should permanently consider having certified therapy dogs available throughout the school year. The use of therapy dogs in schools has proven to contribute to a positive school climate, reduce stress in students and staff members and enhance the academic environment. The visits will be coordinated through the Long Island Chapter of *Love on a Leash*, Ms. Laverty, and myself. All visits will take place outside and the participants will observe COVID-19 social distancing and mask protocols. Please be advised that the handler is the owner of the dog. Both dog and owner are trained and registered to perform this service.

If you DO NOT want your child to participate in the Therapy Dog pilot program, please complete the form below and return it to the your classroom teacher before April 9, 2021. If you have any questions regarding the program, please feel free to contact me at 791-4291.

Sincerely,

Christine Austen

Student's Name: (please print) _____

Please circle the child's grade level and return it your classroom teacher by April 9, 2021.

_____ I do NOT give my child permission to participate in the therapy dog visitations.

Grade Level: K 1 2 3 4 5

Reason: Allergies Discomfort with Animals Other

Parent/Guardian Name: (please print) _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____