

# GTCHS Therapy Dog Program

In 2017-2018, GTCHS implemented a therapy dog program. Sparked by Mrs. Cash's son's use of a therapy dog while undergoing treatments last year during his stay at GHS, we use them to assist students who have high anxiety or may be in stressful situations. Riggs and Stanley are silver labs who are sister and brother. They have been training for several months with Coach Shiley and Mrs. Cash, and have passed certification of the AKC Canine Good Citizen. They have continued training throughout the summer as Therapy Dogs, with the primary focus being on providing emotional support.

Therapy dogs in schools have shown to have positive benefits on the students and their learning (<https://www.therapydogs.com/therapy-dogs-classrooms-campus/>). This program is designed to help students reduce stress by interacting with therapy dogs while at school. Teachers will be able to request the dogs into their classroom to help with test anxiety and other stressful situations that students may face during instructional time. This may be for a few minutes at the beginning of class or for duration of the class. Students may also request their use through their school counselor.

While we know the benefits are great, we also recognize that some students may have had negative experiences with dogs in the past which lead them to have greater anxiety or fear. In addition, we know there are some students with allergies that prevent their interaction with dogs. Being sensitive to that, parents may sign this form and return to their advisor if they choose to OPT OUT of having therapy dogs in use in their classrooms. Not returning this form will be considered consent for your child to participate in our program.

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***Please note: You do not need to return this form unless you are choosing to OPT OUT of your child participating in activities that would include our therapy dogs.***

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for "opting out":

- Fear of dogs
- Allergies to dogs
- Other \_\_\_\_\_