

PSHE: My Special Pet

Think about what a pet is and what would make an appropriate pet and what wouldn't make an appropriate pet. Do you have a pet? Have you ever had a pet? If you could have any pet what would it be?

Complete this sentence:

'My ideal pet would be a ...'

Read the story about Saima and think about these questions:

Saima was so excited when her mum agreed that she could have a pet. But then there was so much to think about. They couldn't have a dog because dogs, especially young ones, need to be given so much attention during the day and Saima's mum goes to work. They thought about the different pets and eventually decided a guinea pig would be a good choice. At the pet shop, the man explained to Saima what kind of food a guinea pig needs and showed her how much to provide every day. Saima listened carefully but what she really wanted was just to get on with choosing her guinea pig. She was surprised to see how many there were and how many different colour combinations. Eventually, she chose a black and tan coloured one which the man said was a girl. "I'm going to call her Stella because she has a star-shaped patch on her back," Saima declared.

At home, Stella was introduced to her new hutch and Saima enjoyed getting everything sorted for her new friend. She carefully placed clean water and food in the hutch and watched as Stella explored her home. Saima stroked her gently, eager to show Stella how much she loved her. When the weekend arrived, Saima worked hard to clean out the hutch and to make sure that Stella had a clean, lovely place to live. Her mother smiled to see how responsibly Saima was behaving now that she had a pet to care for.

- Why do you think a guinea pig was a suitable choice for Saima?
- What did Saima enjoy about having her new pet?
- What new responsibilities did her mum expect her to take on?
- How might Saima's feelings towards Stella change as time passes? (e.g. Saima will probably grow very fond of her pet and feel that Stella is part of the family.)

Now read the story about Ben and think about these questions:

Ben's story

Ben's family had had a dog since before Ben was born. Sandy was a much loved Labrador. Ben loved to watch TV with her cuddled up against his leg. He would

stroke her head enjoying the soft, velvety feel of her ears between his fingers and her warm tongue as she licked his hand affectionately. They had shared so much and enjoyed so many walks but these days Sandy didn't seem to be enjoying her walks as much. She had become really slow and had no enthusiasm. Her paws kept getting sore and it upset Ben to watch her limping along. When it was mealtimes, Sandy didn't seem to enjoy her food either. Ben put the dish on the floor in front of her nose but she sniffed it and walked slowly away. "I think I should take Sandy to the vet," Ben's mum said later that evening.

At school the next day, Ben kept thinking about Sandy. He didn't play football with his friend at playtime and went to sit on the bench instead. Holly sat next to Ben and asked him what was wrong. Ben said he didn't want to talk about it.

When Ben arrived home after school, Sandy was in her basket. Mum explained that she was really poorly and the vet had given some medicine to try her on.

But Sandy didn't improve. One day Ben found his mum crying when he arrived home from school. "I'm sorry love," Ben's mum said, "Sandy has died. I know you loved her so much."

Ben cried as his mum put her arms round him. Sandy's basket was empty. Her lead hung behind the door. Ben couldn't eat much dinner that evening. He found it difficult to go to sleep. Over the next few days, Ben noticed many things were different. He missed the rattle of food bowls when it came to Sandy's dinner time. He missed the walks. He felt the sofa was empty when he watched TV. He looked at the photo of him and Sandy that was on the shelf. He felt empty and sad.

Ben's grandma came to stay a week later. She talked to Ben about Sandy. She explained to him that what he was feeling was quite normal and that although he wouldn't forget Sandy, he would eventually feel more cheerful and that he shouldn't worry. Ben felt better after talking to his grandma. They looked at photos of Sandy and collected some together to put in a special memory book. They even managed to laugh when they remembered some of the stories about Sandy.

- How can we tell Ben enjoys spending time with Sandy?
- When Sandy grew old she struggled to do some things. What did she struggle to do?
- Sometimes vets can cure illnesses and help pets recover their fitness but Sandy died.
- In what ways did being upset affect Ben?
- What did other people do that helped Ben?
- Often it can help us to deal with being upset if we talk about it with someone.
- Who could you talk to if you lost something special like a pet?

Your thoughts about these things can be discussed with someone at home or written down.

Now you can draw a picture of the pet that you would most like to have. Underneath it write what it is and why that would be your favourite pet.