BACK TO SCHOOL... BUT WHAT ABOUT YOUR PET?

September means new pencils, new classrooms and the start of a brand-new school year. But while you're getting used to your new routine, have you ever wondered what your pet thinks about it all?

During the summer holidays, you might have spent much more time at home. Perhaps your dog joined you on family adventures, your cat had someone around to play with during the day, or you had extra time to fuss over your rabbits or guinea pigs.

Then September arrives and suddenly... everyone's busy again!
Pets might not understand what "back to school" means, but they can notice when their **normal routine changes.**

Animals love a routine

Have you ever noticed your pet waiting beside their food bowl just before dinner time? Or your dog getting excited when it's almost time for their usual walk?

Pets can become very good at recognising routines.

They notice things like:

- 🐶 When it's time for a walk
- 🐱 When everyone usually wakes up
- 🐰 When their food normally arrives
- 🐹 When you usually come to play with them
- 🛏️ When the house settles down for bedtime

That's why a big change in your family's routine can sometimes take a little getting used to.

"Where has everybody gone?"

Some pets aren't particularly bothered when the house becomes quieter. Your cat might even be delighted to reclaim their favourite peaceful sleeping spot!

Other animals really enjoy having people around and may need time to adjust when family members suddenly start spending more time away from home.

BEATING PET BOREDOM!

Imagine sitting at home all day with absolutely nothing to do. No books. No toys. No television. Pretty boring, right? Pets need things to keep their brains as well as their bodies busy. This is called **enrichment.**

For Dogs:

Try puzzle feeders, sniffing games, safe chew toys or hiding treats for them to find.

For Cats:

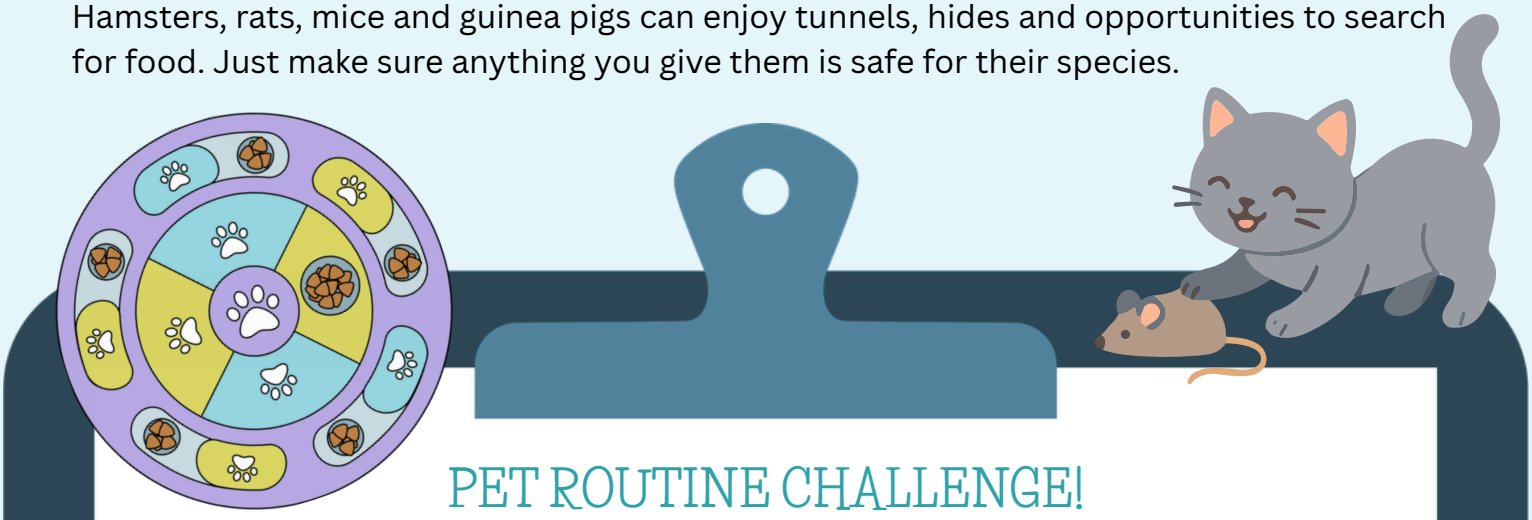
Cats might enjoy cardboard boxes, climbing towers, scratching posts and toys they can chase or pounce on.

For Rabbits:

Tunnels, cardboard boxes and safe things to chew can provide hours of entertainment. You can even hide some of their food around their enclosure so they have to forage for it.

For Small Pets:

Hamsters, rats, mice and guinea pigs can enjoy tunnels, hides and opportunities to search for food. Just make sure anything you give them is safe for their species.



PET ROUTINE CHALLENGE!

Create an after-school routine for you and your pet.

When I get home, I will:

_____

One job I can help with is:

_____

My pet's favourite activity is:

_____

One thing that makes my pet happy is:

_____