



Walter W. Correia, Jr.  
Chief of Police

# Wareham Police Department

2515 Cranberry Highway  
Wareham, Massachusetts 02571  
[www.warehampolice.com](http://www.warehampolice.com)



Phone: (508) 295-3180  
Fax: (508) 291-8652

**TO:** ALL Media Outlets  
**FROM:** Chief Walter W. Correia, Jr.  
**DATE:** February 28, 2024  
**SUBJECT:** Wareham Police Department Comfort Dog

The Wareham Police Department is proud to announce the newest addition to their team, Lexi, a specially trained Comfort Dog. Lexi's role is to provide emotional support and comfort to the citizens of Wareham, particularly to our students. Lexi will be present in our schools daily and will be available during stressful situations. Lexi will also assist in community engagement events and will be on hand to also offer comfort to our police officers.

Wareham Police Department's first Comfort Dog comes to the Wareham Community courtesy of Plymouth County District Attorney Tim Cruz and his office. District Attorney Cruz has awarded the Wareham Police Department with a mini-grant for a comfort dog. District Attorney Cruz developed the Plymouth County Comfort Dogs Program with a goal of providing each police agency in Plymouth County with a comfort dog.

The mission and purpose of the Plymouth County Comfort Dog Program are to provide comfort and emotional support for the well-being of Drug Endangered Children, students with Adverse Childhood Experiences, and children and others who require this service within the Plymouth County community.

Juvenile Detective Karl Baptiste of the Wareham Police Department will be Lexi's handler and he is looking forward to utilizing Lexi in the Wareham Schools as part of his role as School Resource Officer. Juvenile Detective Baptiste is not only the Wareham School Resource Officer, he is also a member of the Southeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council's Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team. Juvenile Detective Baptiste is "best suited" as the handler of Wareham Police Department's first Comfort Dog.

Lexi will play a pivotal role in creating a calming presence for students and staff. She will be involved in various educational and therapeutic activities, helping students with disabilities improve communication and fine motor skills, and serving as a walking behavior incentive for all students. Lexi's presence can help students cope with stress and boost academic engagement, contributing to a more supportive and productive learning environment.

Lexi will be a valuable resource in supporting the mental and emotional well-being of our officers. Research has shown that therapy animals can lower blood pressure, decrease anxiety, and improve mood, which is crucial for personnel facing the high-stress demands of law enforcement.

Lexi's impact will extend beyond the police and school departments. As a community resource, she will help build stronger relationships between the police department and the citizens we serve. Lexi will be an icebreaker, helping to initiate important conversations and provide comfort to community members during outreach events, at children's interview centers, and in shelters. Her presence can make a significant difference in community relations, helping to de-escalate tense situations and allowing for swifter resolution of calls.

The Wareham Police Department is committed to the well-being of our officers and the community we serve. With Lexi joining our ranks, we are taking a significant step forward in promoting mental health, enhancing community engagement, and fostering a compassionate environment for all.

We would like to thank the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office and Charlie Young of Professional K-9 Services of Middleborough, for their efforts in obtaining a comfort dog for the Wareham Community.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Walter W. Correia Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chief Walter W Correia Jr