

School Dog Policy

Policy No. 80

**Policy Owner: College Council
Responsible Person: Principal**

Implemented: 2019



Introduction

This program will involve the regular presence of an approved dog on school premises.

Purpose

Through the presence of a school dog we believe that students wellbeing will be positively enhanced .This will be achieved through improving socialising and self-awareness skills as well as the development of sensitivity to the needs of the dog and care for its wellbeing.

All students and staff will benefit but particularly those students who find it difficult to relate to others. We trust that they will find a dog to be a calming influence and the 'buddy' they may not have or feel comfortable with.

Policy

This policy outlines the guidelines for the school dog being in the school and for his/her care and care of the students and staff. By following the guidelines of this policy we believe that the risk to having a dog on the premises is kept to very low.

Procedures

1. Prior to regular use of a particular dog

Prior to a dog being approved the college will need to have in its records evidence that the dog has had all required vaccinations and worming treatments and that they are fit and healthy. The dog will be registered with the local council, will have identification tag and be regularly cleaned and groomed.

2. The dog will go through a familiarisation induction with students

The approved dog will be introduced to all students making sure that students are aware of how to behave in and around a dog.

The college will regularly host the appropriate agency– such as Responsible Pet Ownership-to teach students about how to treat dogs and to remain safe around dogs.

3. Care of the dog during school

The particular dog will always remain in the charge of a designated staff member and will not be left solely in the presence of students, staff or visitors without that staff member taking responsibility for the dog. Our preference will be for that supervising staff member to be the dog's owner/carer.

4. Dog obedience

The approved dog will need to be placid in nature and to have attended dog education training. Preference is given to a poodle (non shedding dog).

5. Dog tasks

It is hoped that the dog will be able to take part in activities throughout the college so that all students have opportunity to meet the school dog and to have him/her interact with them. This will be a gradual process for some students who may not have had exposure to a dog in their homes or for some reason may have had a unpleasant experience with a dog in the past. There may also be cultural differences affecting a young persons exposure to dogs.

6. Areas of need

The teacher responsible for the dog throughout the day will liaise with staff in charge of wellbeing to ensure that those students who would benefit most from this interaction are included in the dogs day.

NOTE:

- The dog will not be permitted at school if he/she is unwell
- Vet costs and general expenses are paid by the owner
- Dog will kept on a lead when moving between rooms/classrooms
- Will be monitored at all times
- Will have a safe area where he/she can rest away from students/staff.
- Will be well cared for, fed and watered during the day
- Will only use appropriate toileting areas away from student access areas and any excrement will be disposed of appropriately
- Will have a school tie/coat to ensure he/she is recognised as an authorised dog on the school premises

Students:

- Will not have sole responsibility for the dog
- Will be reminded of appropriate behaviours around dog with each contact
- Will always be reminded to respect the dog and remain calm around him at all times
- Will be gentle and not make sudden movements or attempts to physically contact the dog when unsupervised
- Will always approach dog standing
- Will always approach the dog in a calm slow manner
- Will not disturb the dog while he/she is eating, drinking or sleeping
- Will never feed the dog
- Will continue to develop understanding of the dog through the dogs development
- Will demonstrate respect for dogs role within the college community.

All those at school:

- To abide by the rule that 'we don't hurt the dog'.
- Are to wash their hands after handling the dog

If the dog is hurt or injured (accident or by student or staff member or community member or visitor)

- Dog will be removed calmly from the situation by the owner or staff member in charge
- Dog to be taken to safe area
- Owner or responsible staff member to take dog to the vet
- Parents informed if harm caused by student
- Follow up investigation by owner and Principal or her delegate

Incident protocols

- Owner/Principal notified immediately
- Parents notified immediately
- Seek medical attention if required
- Inform all staff of the incident via email
- Follow up investigation by Principal or her delegate
- If there is a personality clash then a safe buffer of 3 metres will be maintained between person and dog.

Responsibilities

The dogs owner will ensure that there is a dog pack containing excrement bags, rubber gloves and hand sanitizer with the dog at all times.

Any dog excrement is to be cleaned and disposed of appropriately by the person in charge of the dog - (will be a staff member)

Where possible– external gates to the college are to remain closed for student safety and to contain the dog when he/she is on site.

Further information regarding dog programs:

Lead the Way (therapy dog training) <http://www.ltw.com.au>

Assistance Dogs Australia– <http://www.assistedogs.org.au>

Review

The School Dog policy will be reviewed by the College Council as part of the Strategic Planning review cycle.

Further Information regarding this policy

Further details can be obtained from the College Principal or a member of the Senior Management Team.