



DOGS AT SCHOOL POLICY



Help for non-English speakers.

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Whittlesea Primary School.

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the rules and procedures we have in place in relation to dogs attending our school grounds. This includes the procedures in place for our wellbeing dog program to support student engagement and mental health.

SCOPE

POLICY

Definitions

An assistance dog is trained and certified by a registered organisation to perform tasks or functions that help a person with a disability to alleviate the effects of the disability.

A wellbeing dog is a dog that has been suitably trained to provide animal-assisted wellbeing programs under the control of his/her handler.

A handler is a volunteer in the school who is responsible and in control of a wellbeing dog while on school grounds and when facilitating the animal wellbeing program.

A pet dog relates to any dog that is privately owned in the community for companionate reasons, rather than as a support function that requires specific skills or training.

A stray dog is any dog that is not accompanied by their owner.

Assistance dogs

Whittlesea Primary School understands its obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic) and will make reasonable adjustments for members of our school community with a disability who require an 'assistance animal' to help alleviate the effects of their disability. Assistance animals are permitted to attend our school with their handler. Our school Principal can lawfully ask a person to produce evidence that an animal:

- is trained specifically to assist a person to alleviate the effects of a disability (e.g., seeing eye dogs, hearing and physical assistance dogs and)
- meets standards of hygiene and behaviour appropriate for a school environment.

We understand that in some circumstances, students may require an assistance animal to attend school to help them to participate in their educational program. Whittlesea Primary School will consider a request by

a student with a disability to allow an assistance animal to attend school with them on a case-by-case basis. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact the Principal.

Pet dogs

Whittlesea Primary School is not a public place, and our principal has the authority to permit or decline entry to school grounds and impose conditions of entry.

Dogs Prohibited (General)

Whilst Whittlesea Primary School understands that many families in our school community keep dogs as pets, to ensure that our school remains a safe and inclusive place for everyone, pet dogs are **not permitted** on school grounds under any circumstances.

Our school community is diverse and may include people that are allergic or uncomfortable around dogs. We are also conscious of the health hazards that may be posed by dogs. We ask that families please leave their pet dogs at home or safely tether them outside school grounds when attending our school or school events.

Dogs Permitted (School Discretion)

Whilst Whittlesea Primary School understands that many families in our school community keep dogs as pets, to ensure that our school remains a safe and inclusive place for everyone, we have in place a number of rules that we expect all families to follow if they wish to bring their pet dog onto school grounds.

Share Time

When sharing a new puppy in classrooms, the following guidelines must be adhered to.

- the teacher must know the breed of dog and its age and refer the request to the Principal/Assistant Principal
- once the visit is approved, the teacher must provide a copy of the Dogs In Schools policy to the parent/carer and nominate a day/date
- all visits must occur at 3.00PM
- one week before the visit, the classroom teacher should notify parents via Compass, including information about the breed, age of the dog and date and time of visit. Teachers should ask parents to make contact should they not want their child involved
- pet dogs must be leashed at all times and in the control of (held by) a responsible adult (i.e., parent)
- children must only pet the dog on the withers or back. Children are not to put their hands anywhere near the ears or face of the dog
- pet dogs must not be tied up on school grounds or left unaccompanied
- families that bring dogs to school that exhibit signs of aggressive behaviour, bark, or jump will be asked to remove the dog from school premises immediately.

The Principal has the authority to prohibit certain dogs from school grounds or modify this policy to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff, students and members of our school community at any time.

Stray dogs

Unaccompanied or stray dogs sighted at our school should be reported immediately to the Principal. School staff will contact municipal authorities and/or Victoria Police for assistance in managing and removing a stray dog from school grounds, and ensure staff and students remain safe at school.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school’s website (or insert other online parent/carer/student communication method)
- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Discussed at student forums
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- Duty of Care Policy
- Visitors policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	Tuesday 23 rd May 2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2027