



Dingley Primary School Therapy Dog Policy

Written by	Assistant Principal
Date Approved by School Council	September 2019
Date of Review	September 2022

1. Rationale:

1.1. Trained dog(s) will be part of the wellbeing and engagement approach at Dingley Primary School. Research shows that therapy dog programs provide significant benefits for students as the dogs are trained to use their social instincts and learned social skills to provide health, social-emotional, and cognitive benefits. Just being in contact with a therapy dog calms children reducing feelings of anxiety and enabling children to focus on learning. The dog(s) will also provide social-emotional support to staff and the wider school community when appropriate.

2. Aims:

2.1. Trained dog(s) will be part of the wellbeing and engagement approach at Dingley Primary School. Research shows that therapy dog programs provide significant benefits for students as the dogs are trained to use their social instincts and learned social skills to provide health, social-emotional, and cognitive benefits. Just being in contact with a therapy dog calms children reducing feelings of anxiety and enabling children to focus on learning. The dog(s) will also provide social-emotional support to staff and the wider school community when appropriate.

3. Implementation:

3.1. **Therapy Dog Selection**

- 3.1.1. Funding will be sought to fully train suitable dog(s).
- 3.1.2. Staff will be invited to apply for their dog to undertake this training.
- 3.1.3. Selection will be based on such factors as the dog's temperament, age and availability as well as the owner's availability to engage with their dog across the school.
- 3.1.4. All dogs must be completely up to date with all medical and vaccination requirements.
- 3.1.5. The owner will ensure their dog is regularly groomed.

3.2. **Daily management of Therapy Dog(s)**

Dogs will:

- 3.2.1. Be trained as a therapy dog through a recognised course. Training will be ongoing.
- 3.2.2. Be kept on lead at all times
- 3.2.3. Be under the supervision of their owner or delegated to an adult "second handler" at all times. All "second handlers" will be trained in and expected to use consistent basic commands
- 3.2.4. Be up to date with all vaccinations, worming and grooming
- 3.2.5. Have at least one rest area in the school designated by the owner. In this space the dog can have "time out" from interactions.
- 3.2.6. Wear therapy dog vest when working at school to ensure they are recognised as therapy support dogs.
- 3.2.7. Not be allowed in school if unwell
- 3.2.8. Not be taken off the site without owner unless in emergencies.

3.3. **Student expectations**

Students will:

- 3.3.1. be educated in appropriate behaviour around the dog
- 3.3.2. never have sole responsibility for the dog or be left unsupervised around the dog
- 3.3.3. be expected to respect the dog and remain calm around the dog at all times
- 3.3.4. request permission before touching the dog
- 3.3.5. not disturb the dog while eating, drinking or sleeping
- 3.3.6. never feed the dog
- 3.3.7. Continue to undertake their learning and interact with the dog only when determined to be the beneficial by the adult supervising the dog.

3.4. **Health and Safety**

- 3.4.1. Parents will be given the option for their child to not have the dog interact directly with their child.
- 3.4.2. All persons should always clean their hands after handling the dog
- 3.4.3. Any dog excrement to be disposed of appropriately by adult supervising the dog
- 3.4.4. Visitors to school will be informed of the dog at the school reception
- 3.4.5. Other dogs are allowed on school premises only with permission from Principal.
- 3.4.6. Dogs who are part of additional programs will comply with this school policy and agreements required by the external organisation providing the program.

3.5. **If a dog or student is hurt or injured**



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- 3.5.1. Dog will be removed by owner or delegate calmly from the situation
- 3.5.2. Dog to be moved to safe area
- 3.5.3. Owner to take dog to the Vet if required
- 3.5.4. Parents informed if harm caused by or to student and incident protocols followed.
- 3.5.5. Seek medical attention if required
- 3.5.6. Inform all staff of the incident
- 3.5.7. An investigation to be conducted by Principal, or the principal's nominee and recorded using the appropriate OHS templates.

3 Resources:

- 3.1 Therapy Dog Training - Lead the Way Institute <https://leadthewayinstitute.com.au/services/therapy-dog-training-and-certification/>
- 3.2 Therapy Dog Training - K9 Support.. <http://www.k9support.com.au/>
- 3.3 School Therapy Dogs <http://www.schooltherapydogs.org/>
- 3.4 Dogs in the classroom <http://www.creativeteachingsite.com/dogs/dogs.html>

4 Evaluation:

- 4.1 This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.