

DOGS AT SCHOOL

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the rules and procedures we have in place in relation to dogs attending our school grounds.

POLICY

Assistance Dogs

Concord 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 alleviate the effects of a disability (eg seeing eye dogs)
- 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. Concord 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.

Support Dogs

Dogs offer unconditional love and support. The most important "job" of a Support Dog is to share their affection and companionship with all people they come into contact with.

At Concord School we have a Support Dog onsite. The aim of a Support Dog is to improve the wellbeing and engagement of students, increase attendance, assist in managing behaviours and decrease anxiety for both students and staff.

Context

- The Support Dog is housed and managed by a staff member
- The Support Dog is a member of the wellbeing team at Concord School.
- The Support Dog is a Labradoodle, she has been chosen for her temperament, intelligence and her hypoallergenic non-moulting coat
- Visitors to school will be informed of the Support Dog at the school reception area via the Compass kiosk
- The Support Dog is to attend school every day her owner is present
- The Support Dog will be regularly groomed to minimise allergic contact
- The Support Dog will only be put in situations where students voluntarily participate, thus avoiding risky contact.

Expenses

Concord School will meet the costs of:

Purchase and delivery

- Training for the Support Dog and owner as needed and agreed to by Assistant Principal
- Immunisations
- Registration
- Pet Insurance cover (mid level or equivalent cost)
- All other expenses including vet fees not covered by pet insurance and gap costs to be met by the owner.

Daily management of the Support Dog

- Not allowed in school if unwell.
- Will be kept on lead or direct control when moving between classrooms.
- Be under the supervision of her owner or delegated staff member at all times.
- Continue to be trained in obedience, including release time inside the school grounds.
- Be up to date with all vaccinations, worming and grooming.
- Will not be taken off the site without her owner or nominated staff.
- Will have a safe area within the school.
- Will wear training vest to ensure she is recognised as a Support Dog.

Student expectations

- Will not have sole responsibility for the Support Dog.
- Will be reminded of appropriate behaviours around the Support Dog.
- Will always be reminded to respect the Support Dog and remain calm around her at all times.
- Always approach the Support Dog in a calm slow manner
- Not to disturb the Support Dog while she is eating, drinking or sleeping.
- Never to feed the Support Dog.
- Will abide by the rule *'we are kind to the Support Dog'*

Health and Safety

- All persons should always wash their hands after handling the Support Dog
- Any the Support Dog excrement to be cleaned and disposed of appropriately by owner
- Where possible - external gates to the school to remained closed at all times while the Support Dog is onsite

If the Support Dog is hurt or injured (accident or by student)

- The Support Dog will be removed by her owner calmly from the situation if required
- Owner to take the Support Dog to the Vet if required,
- Child's Parents informed if harm caused by student
- Follow up investigation by owner and Assistant Principal

Pet Dogs

Concord 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.

Staff require approval from the Principal to bring their dog onto school grounds.

Whilst Concord 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 staff or families to follow if they wish to bring their pet dog onto school grounds:

- pet dogs must be leashed at all times and in the control of a responsible adult
- 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 may be asked to leave.

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 Concord School office. 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.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Risk Management: S:\MANAGEMENT\OH & S\POPPY

Memorandum of Understanding: S:\MANAGEMENT\OH & S\POPPY