

**Lisieux Catholic Primary School**

**School Dog Policy**

Introduction

At Lisieux Catholic Primary School we believe that it is our mission to nurture the conditions and environment that will allow every member of our community to thrive, and to have life in abundance. We strive to nurture a culture where our students:

• Feel safe, connected and valued;

• Are supported to grow socially, emotionally, academically and spiritually;

• Are empowered, through rigorous and authentic learning opportunities, to be capable, engaged and responsible learners.

A variety of animals, including dogs, are becoming valued and worthwhile additions to school communities. Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop skills such as empathy and leadership through contact with a dog. We believe a school dog will be a unique means by which to enrich all areas of student wellbeing.

This policy applies to the approved school dog/s only. It does not affect the school’s right to prohibit other dogs on school property.

Rationale:

There are numerous benefits of having a dog in school including, but not limited to:

• The presence and care of a school dog enable children to put our school values into practice: e.g. Kindness, compassion, gratitude.

• Dogs can have a direct impact on decreasing anxiety, resulting in improved learning outcomes, such as reading and writing levels.

• Reading programs with dogs have great success. Dogs can be used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud;

• We encourage students to develop a growth mindset, to be resilient learners who are not afraid to make mistakes and to persevere with the acquisition of new skills. A dog is an excellent role model for this as training dogs takes time and repetition;

• The presence of a calm and well-trained dog may increase social support and peer interaction;

• School dogs can provide an excellent resource and tangible motivation for children in all subject areas;

• Students may develop increased empathy through connection with an animal;

• Students will have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. Involving students in the daily care of school dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care.

Implementation

The dog, Buddy, is a Labradoodle pup who has been specifically chosen as a ‘low allergen’ dog, renowned for positive relationships with children. Lisieux staff will take reasonable care to avoid, as far as possible, any contact between the school dog and students, staff or visitors where allergic reactions are a known risk, however, the cooperation of all staff, visitors and students is requested by notifying the School of any known or suspected health concerns.

Parents / Carers will be informed of the intention to have a school dog before it comes to school. They will be provided with access to the School Dog Policy.

Parents / Carers will have the right to remove consent for their child to have direct contact with the dog. Any such wishes will be respected and upheld by the school. These wishes will be communicated by ‘opting out’ of contact with the school dog.

The dog’s health and wellbeing will be prioritised along with that of students and staff.

Anyone with a fear of dogs will be respected and never forced to interact with the dog.

Protocols

• The dog will undertake training in obedience, and continue to be trained in obedience.

• All vaccinations, worming treatments and vet checks will be up-to-date and paid for by the dog’s owner.

• There will be appropriate adult supervision at all times when the dog is present with students.

• The dog will be kept on a lead when moving from his regular location, the office of the Principal.

• If the dog is unwell, it will not be allowed into school.

• Notices will be displayed to inform students, staff and visitors of the dog’s presence.

• Any dog waste will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately. If any ‘accidents’ occur in areas where children have access to, appropriate measures will be taken to disinfect the affected site.

Incident protocols:

Should there be an incident of harm to dog or student

• The dog will be moved to his safe area.

• Parents will be informed if harm has been caused by or to student.

• Medical attention will be sought if required.

• A full investigation by Principal or Principal delegate will take place.

Student expectations

• Students will not have responsibility for the dog.

• Students will be reminded of appropriate behaviours around the dog and should remain calm around him at all times.

• Students should not feed the dog and the dog will not be permitted near students when they are eating.

• Students should always wash their hands after handling the dog.

Review Cycle and Evaluation

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| **POLICY DATES** |
| ***Implemented*** | April 2021 | ***Reviewed*** |  |
| ***Next Review Due*** | 2024 |
| **POLICY AUTHORISATION** |
| ***Principal*** | Dr Susan Ryan  | ***Signature*** | https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/LhhwXS02R3C6lFqEyhXgOOivSn4A19KfjCkGH-luON1FIxYIWHG9dPs_JLrzq1DaMaGMyl164fFWW9RcRBGNe9dq_TG9q4O_zJCyHj-yIldIUZnXai1JTmngqe8Z_WC6qYhZcTI  |