

MELTON WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

THERAPY DOG

PURPOSE

The aim of this program is to improve the social and emotional wellbeing and engagement of students and staff through interactions with a therapy dog.

This will be achieved through improving socialization and self-awareness skills which form part of the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies. These competencies are linked to the Victorian Curriculum standards and it is expected that these are taught and assessed as part of the Victorian Curriculum. The Program will commence in its full capacity in Term 3 2021.

SCOPE

The objectives of this program is to improve teaching and learning practices related to SEL competencies and to gather evidence to show improvement in student outcomes. If this project is successful we expect to see improvements in student engagement and behaviours, which will be reflected in school data.

This program will complement our schools existing work around School Wide Positive Behaviour Support and Respectful Relationships.

POLICY

The Therapy Dog and its handler will be fully trained by a specialised Therapy Dog training company.

This training includes developing the dog's ability to support students and staff to self-regulate and to be a calming influence.

While at school the Therapy Dog will reside in the Wellbeing office with the Therapy Dog Handler. When off duty the Therapy Dog will spend its time in its 'safe zone', within the Wellbeing Office.

The Therapy Dog will always be up to date with medical and vaccination requirements and will be regularly groomed.

Before the Therapy Dog begins interacting with students, all families will be given a note explaining the program, including the purpose of having a Therapy Dog at school and will have the option of 'Opting-Out' of the Program, as well as indicating if their child has an allergy to dogs.

On enrolment parents will be provided with a copy of this Policy and the Opt-Out letter to complete if they do not want their child to interact with the Therapy Dog.

Students will be educated in appropriate behaviour around the Therapy Dog. Students will have interactions with the Therapy Dog either within their classroom or individually in the Wellbeing Office.

Any accidents or incidents involving the Therapy Dog is covered under the DET public liability insurance.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The proposed Therapy Dog is called Lady Marmalade, who is a purebred British Bulldog. She belongs to the Wellbeing Officer Ms Korrina Glen, who is responsible for the care and wellbeing of the dog, at all times.

Lady Marmalade began attending obedience training at 10 weeks old.

During the first 12 months of Lady Marmalade working at Melton West Primary School her work with students will be based around socializing her to the school environment, with limited interactions with students, until her training is complete.

At 12 months of age both the Lady Marmalade and Korrina Glen will attend training at **K9 Support** who specialise in training therapy dogs. Once this training is complete they will be certified as a Therapy Dog and Therapy Dog Handler.

As part of the Lady Marmalade's training she will be temperament tested and she will be exposed to a range of experiences.

Details of Insurance/Vet Details:

Woolworths Pet Insurance: Policy Number WW11872314 Cover period: 4 th August 2020 until 4 th August 2021 Cover Type: standard Ph: 1300 10 1234	Eureka Veterinary Group: 121 Creswick Road, Ballarat VIC 3350 Ph: 03 5333 5959
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RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- Duty of Care Policy: [Duty of care policy Aug 2018.doc](#)
- Visitors Policy: [Visitors Policy May 2019.doc](#)
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy: [Student Wellbeing and Engagement - Policy Template - July 2020.docx](#)
- K9 Training Certification: <http://www.k9support.com.au/trainingandcertification>

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was last updated on September 2020 and is scheduled for review in September 2021.

School Council	Consultation required
Date Reviewed/Approved	September 2020
Communication method	School Website, Staffcom, Induction Pack
Date communicated	October 2020
Source of Requirement	Minimum Standards
Responsible for Review	Assistant Principal
Review Cycle	One Year review cycle
Next Review Due Date	September 2021
References	Beaumaris North Primary School