



## SCHOOL THERAPY DOG POLICY

### Purpose

To explain the rationale and arrangements for Orchard Grove Primary School for taking on a School Therapy Dog to augment our Wellbeing Program at the school.

The benefits to younger children of a school dog are well documented, and include:

- A calming effect on students;
- Improved behaviour and concentration;
- Improved self-esteem;
- Promotes for the children a sense of belonging and acceptance;
- Increased participation by more withdrawn children;
- Encouraging a sense of responsibility and respect for life;
- Helping children develop confidence in reading.

### Guidelines

- Authority for a school dog at OGPS rests with School Council;
- The Principal and staff are responsible for the supervision of the school dog when on OGPS premises;
- The school dog will be sourced from a reputable breeder;
- The School dog must complete dog training before being allowed on school premises. School Council will allocate funds to contribute to any further, higher level training if required and insurance. Evidence must be provided to School Council of the completion of appropriate professional training;
- The welfare of the dog must be a priority at all times and appropriate measures taken for 'timeout' and health needs of the dog;
- At the start of each school year, information about the School Therapy Dog program will be in the school newsletter. Parents are able to inform the School if they do not wish their child/children to have direct contact with the school dog, whether on medical grounds (such as allergies) or fear of dogs;
- The Principal will be responsible for managing student access to the school dog;
- The Principal will be responsible for setting clear expectations and guidelines on how to interact with the dog;
- All classes where possible will have regular access to the school dog. A class schedule for the school dog will be set up, based on the needs of the students and in consultation with class teachers;
- Students will be instructed to wash their hands after handling the dog;
- All staff will be responsible for the welfare of the school dog whilst on OGPS grounds, including the provision of food and water, walking the dog and ensuring appropriate toileting arrangements;
- Any cases of aggressive behaviour by the school dog to a student, parent or member of staff must be reported to the Principal and to School Council;
- The Principal will prepare an annual report to School Council on the school dog program;
- Insurance, in the event of the dog being injured or becoming ill at school, will be met by Orchard Grove Primary School;

- All other costs, including veterinary bills and vaccinations, will be met by the owner of the dog;
- Costs to the School may be offset by sponsorship from appropriate companies and individual donations or fundraising.

**Ratified by Council 2017**

**Review 2020**