

WELLBEING DOG POLICY



1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the Gleeson College community around working with a wellbeing dog to enhance wellbeing and engagement. This policy also outlines the process in order to seek approval from the College Principal (or delegate) should a staff member wish to propose a dog visit for the purpose of student wellbeing.

The social and emotional learning competencies which can be developed through having a dog visit at school are linked to South Australian Curriculum standards. This policy also outlines the College's responsibility in ensuring the wellbeing of the wellbeing dog and minimizing the risk of harm. A Risk Assessment has been conducted to capture associated hazards and implement necessary controls to eliminate or reduce the level of risk associated to the College and the animal.

Wellbeing dog visits will be considered and assessed on an individual basis and approval is at the discretion of the Principal (or delegate).

2. RATIONALE

Students experience a greater willingness to be active in the school environment when there is a wellbeing dog. Other schools have shared that their attendance rates improved as students looked forward to seeing the dog and interacting with them.

A dog in school gives students a shared interest with other members of the school community. This helps them interact and build connections that they may have struggled to do otherwise. Examples include, wellbeing dogs used with literacy programs as students may be less self-conscious reading to dogs than teachers or their peers.

A wellbeing dog can give students a sense of responsibility. They learn how to take care of the dog and how to delegate care which can help grow their leadership skills. Students can see the impact of their actions on their wellbeing dog. This helps them understand how their behaviour impacts people around them. As a result, students learn to be more empathetic and understanding.

3. OWNERSHIP AND COSTS

The College does not own the dog as they are a family pet.

The dog owner is responsible for:

- All associated vet, grooming, cleaning and medical costs
- Dog food and feeding/drinking equipment
- Medical costs outside of pet insurance including excess

The school will be responsible for ensuring a safe environment is provided for the dog and the owner and any identified risks have been assessed and controlled as much as reasonably practicable.

4. SELECTION AND TRAINING

School dogs used for classroom and environmental enrichment do not require approval from the Non-Government Schools Animal Ethics Committee. The primary concern of the school must be the welfare of these animals at all times, including the provision of care during weekends and school holidays (if applicable) and veterinary care when needed. When selecting dogs, they will be chosen for their mild temperament, intelligence and their hypoallergenic non-moulting coat. All dogs must have completed obedience training and be able to walk calmly on a lead/harness.

Other qualities must include:

- Friendly temperament
- Confident
- Gentle
- Ease in all situations
- Enjoy human contact

A 'rest spot' will be allocated to the dog where they will spend time if they are not working with students. A dog bed may be provided in this space. This area shall be determined in consultation with the dog owner, College Principal (or delegate) and the College Safety, Risk & Compliance Officer. The 'rest spot' can be used at any time the owner desires and will be used to ensure the dog has opportunity for down time.

5. DAILY MANAGEMENT

The dog will:

- only attend school if the owner permits
- only attend school if the Principal (or member of the College Leadership Team) permits
- only attend if they are healthy
- be kept on lead during times of high human traffic and activity
- be allowed off lead when in a controlled and contained environment
- only be taken off site without the designated person in case of emergencies
- be put on lead and returned to its safe space and/or owner if the dog shows any signs of stress or unwanted behaviours
- Be the responsibility of the owner for the duration of all visits

As applicable, members of the College community will be provided with information regarding appropriate behaviours around the dog and hygiene practices. Should the dog handler need to delegate dog-supervision to another staff member within the College, the owner will discuss and oversee the expectations associated with being the designated supervisor.

The College community will have access to the "Wellbeing dog risk assessment" and this policy, as required.

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

As applicable notices will be displayed to inform the College community of the dog's presence. Students will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Students must remain calm when interacting and working around the dog. They should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog. Student should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up. Students should never go near or disturb the dog if it is sleeping or eating. Students will not be allowed to play too roughly with the

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dog. If the dog is surrounded by a large number of students, the dog could become nervous and agitated.

Students are not permitted to feed the dog or eat close to the dog. The dog will not be allowed to enter the school kitchen, or any classroom where food is being prepared. The dog is also not permitted to enter learning areas where there is increased risk of injury or property damage, such as Science laboratories, Home Economics and Design and Technologies.

6. HEALTH

The dog will meet medical and vaccination requirements. This will be maintained for the duration of their visits to the College. The dog must be regularly groomed and washed as part of their preparation for their visit to the College. The dog may attend the College on certain dates and time periods that shall be pre-determined between the dog owner and the Principal (or delegate).

Accident or Injury

In the event of an accident or injury (School dog or member of the school community) the dog will be removed from the immediate area and taken to their rest area by the designated person or handler as required.

Following an injury or incident, the following steps must take place and are a shared responsibility of the owner, Principal (or delegate) and College Safety, Risk & Compliance Officer;

- First aid administered if required
- People involved examined and the area made safe
- Parents and owner informed of the incident
- Incident report completed and submitted to the Safety Risk & Compliance Officer
- Incident investigated

College shall encourage those involved to practice thorough hygiene and hand-watching practices, particularly after petting and interacting with the dog.

The College shall provide access to areas to wash hands or non-water-based products for cleaning of hands.

Transfer of Disease

The Handler/Owner to provide annual vaccination evidence to the College upon request, to demonstrate the dog is fully vaccinated.

The Handler/Owner to provide annual vaccination evidence to demonstrate the dog has had a full health assessment and regular health checks with their vet.

Handler/Owner to provide evidence that their dog has received the necessary flea/tick and heartworm preventative regime medications.

Students or staff that have a known allergies to dogs must have opportunity to alert the College in order to identify necessary controls and give the student the option to opt out if required or discuss modified participation. This shall be included in the parent consent form.

Disclosure of associated concerns with dog interactions and fear of dogs to be included within parent consent form, before the visit occurs. If it is identified that an attendee is fearful of dogs, the dog will not visit the classroom/leave the classroom. This will be communicated during a presentation to students about the dog, and during classroom visits.

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The dog owner shall provide evidence (or testimony) of the dog temperament to ensure their suitability for the College visit.

Dog bites, scratches and associated illness and injuries are covered under workplace injuries via the Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) and will be managed in the same way as other workplace injuries or illnesses. A staff (or student) incident report must be completed as required.

The dog handler must provide clear instructions to the attendees on how their dog likes to be approached and interacted with.



With regard to cleanliness, attendees are encouraged to pat the dog in a low-risk environment. The dog is required to be groomed and tidy at all times, frequency to be determined by the owner.

The handler must carry bags to clean up after their dog at all times. The handler is required to toilet the dog on a regular basis and to ensure any mess is cleaned up immediately when visiting the College. Indoor mess must be cleaned with disinfectant and cleaning waste disposed of in a suitable outdoor rubbish bin.

The dog's wellbeing is paramount to the College. Handlers are trained to identify stress as well as how to avoid injuries whilst on the school grounds. If the handler identifies stress in the dogs, they must cease the visit immediately and remove their dog from the building / yard.

7. EVALUATION

The Leadership Team is responsible for the evaluation of this policy which will take place every 3 years. They may wish to seek opinions from other staff, parents and students as to the effectiveness of the policy.

Signed		Principal or delegate	Dated 03/08/2022
Signed		Chairperson of Board or delegate	Dated: 23.8.22