

DOGS AT CRANBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Cranbourne Primary School on 5996 1744 or email Cranbourne.ps@education.vic.gov.au

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the rules and procedures we have in place in relation to dogs attending our school grounds. This includes the procedures in place for our wellbeing dog program to support student engagement and mental health.

POLICY

Definitions

An **assistance dog** is trained and certified by a registered organisation to perform tasks or functions that help a person with a disability to alleviate the effects of the disability.

A **pet dog** relates to any dog that is privately owned in the community for companionate reasons, rather than as a support function that requires specific skills or training.

A **stray dog** is any dog that is not accompanied by their owner.

A **school dog** is a trained, supervised dog that is part of the school community and supports student wellbeing and learning

School Dog

Cranbourne Primary School supports the use of school dogs for the benefit of our students subject to the conditions of this policy. The role of the school dog is to support the social and emotional needs of our students, under the guidance and supervision of their handler and other school staff.

Cranbourne Primary School has a school dog who supports our student's mental health and engagement. Our school dog is suitably trained and integrated into the school community.

Recognised benefits from working or visiting with a school dog include:

- reduced stress and anxiety, including decreased learner anxiety behaviours
- improved physical and emotional wellbeing
- improved self-esteem, empathy and interpersonal skills
- improved relationship building and ability to pick up on social cues
- improved attendance (for disengaged students or students at risk of disengaging).

Examples of activities students may engage in with the school dog include:

- petting and/or hugging the dog
- speaking and reading to the dog
- giving the dog commands that the dog is trained to respond to.

Where possible, Cranbourne Primary School will only engage with low-allergen school dogs. Cranbourne Primary School will take care to avoid, where possible, contact between the school dog and students, staff, and visitors where the school is aware they have allergies to dogs.

Staff, students and visitors are requested to notify the school of any health or safety concerns about the school dog. We are committed to consulting with students and parent(s)/carer(s) in relation to any such health or safety concerns so that appropriate arrangements can be made on a case-by-case basis.

School dog standards and procedures

- There will be a maximum of one school dog at any given time.
- When the school dog is on school grounds they will be under the supervision of a handler or staff member. The school dog will not be unsupervised or alone with students. A safe area separate to the school classrooms and offices will be allocated to the school dog and their handlers where they will spend time when they are not working with students.
- The handlers will ensure that the school dog does not pose a health and safety risk to any student, employee, or other person at school and that the school dog is brought to school only when properly groomed, bathed, free of illness or injury and of the temperament appropriate for working with the school community. In the event the school is made aware that the dog triggers a student's health condition (for example, allergies or asthma), the school will notify the student's parent/carers and ensure appropriate steps are implemented to minimise health risks.
- The school dog will be appropriately identified while on school grounds.
- No student or staff member will be required to interact with the school dog. If a student indicates that they wish to overcome any fear of dogs, they can be supported to do so with coaching in a controlled environment with the school dog and their handler.

Assistance dogs

Cranbourne Primary 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 to alleviate the effects of a disability (e.g., seeing eye dogs, hearing and physical assistance 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. Cranbourne Primary 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. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact the Principal on 5996 1744.

Pet dogs

Cranbourne Primary 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.

Whilst Cranbourne Primary 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, pet dogs are not permitted on school grounds under any circumstances (including if they are leashed, held or otherwise restrained).

Our school community is diverse and may include people that are allergic or uncomfortable around dogs. We are also conscious of the health hazards that may be posed by dogs. We ask that families please leave their pet dogs at home or safely tether them outside school grounds when attending our school or school events.

Stray dogs

Unaccompanied or stray dogs sighted at our school should be reported immediately to the 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.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

[Duty of Care Policy](#)

[Visitors policies.](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	November 2025
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	November 2028