



Wellbeing Dog Procedure

Associated National Quality Standards	Education and Care Services National Law or Regulation	Associated department policy, procedure or guideline
	Regulation Regulation Regulation National Law	Student health https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policylibrary/policies/student-health-in-nsw-public-schools-a-summary-and-consolidation-of-policy?refid=285776 Animal welfare in schools https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policylibrary/policies/animal-welfare-policy-schools
Pre-reading and reference documents		
Keeping Pets and Animals in Education ACECQA https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-07/QA3_InfoSheetKeepingPetsAndAnimalsInEducationAndCareServices.pdf Animals in schools for teachers http://nswschoolanimals.com/dogs/		
Staff roles and responsibilities		
School principal	The principal as Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader and Responsible Person holds primary responsibility for the preschool. The principal is responsible for ensuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the preschool is compliant with legislative standards related to this procedure at all times ● all staff involved in the preschool are familiar with and implement this procedure ● all procedures are current and reviewed as part of a continuous cycle of self-assessment. 	
Preschool supervisor	The preschool supervisor supports the principal in their role and is responsible for leading the review of this procedure through a process of self-assessment and critical reflection. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analysing complaints, incidents or issues and what the implications are for the updates to this procedure ● reflecting on how this procedure is informed by relevant recognised authorities ● planning and discussing ways to engage with families and communities, including how changes are communicated ● developing strategies to induct all staff when procedures are updated to ensure practice is embedded. 	

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<p>Preschool educators (This includes all staff; casuals, lunch cover, volunteers and anyone else who works in the preschool)</p>	<p>The preschool educators are responsible for working with leadership to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● all staff in the preschool and daily practices comply with this procedure ● storing this procedure in the preschool, and making it accessible to all staff, families, visitors and volunteers ● being actively involved in the review of this procedure, as required, or at least annually ● ensuring the details of this procedure's review are documented. 	
<p>Procedure</p>		

Purpose

A dog that works with different students across a school is known as an wellbeing dog. Wellbeing dogs are trained by trained school staff members following a registered program.

Wellbeing dogs foster social-emotional development. Children are able to bond easily with gentle dogs, helping them to feel more connected and confident. Wellbeing dogs stimulate social behaviour in children such as talking and sharing. These relationships build trust and trustworthiness in children and help them to develop a greater capacity for empathy.

Wellbeing dogs support early literacy, in particular early reading as children engage with simple texts with the dog. Concentration, attention, motivation and relaxation are enhanced.

Handler

Under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1979), only a person 18 years and over can be considered responsible for a dog. Responsibility for the Wellbeing dog remains with the handler, Miriam McKeown or Shiralee Robinson when at preschool. Sandra Gray – Wellbeing AP is the primary handler who cares for the dog off-site and who designates who takes the dog on site. When visiting the preschool the wellbeing dog will remain on a lead at all times.

The primary handler is responsible for ensuring the wellbeing dog is clean and well kept (recently brushed to reduce irritation from fur and saddle harness clean and aired).

The handler is responsible for ensuring the wellbeing dog has an opportunity to toilet before visiting the preschool.

If the educational support dog soils in the preschool the handler will clear away waste in a dog waste bag and dispose of into the otto bin. Preschool educators will disinfect according to the cleaning procedure.

The preschool teacher and the handler consult with the Nominated Supervisor and Preschool Supervisor about the wellbeing dog visits to the preschool. Educators and handler will be flexible during visits, taking into account the current needs of the children and the dog.

The handler will remain aware of the wellbeing dog cues and will remove the dog from preschool when anxious, unsettled or tired.

The wellbeing dog will be removed from the preschool if a child's behaviour threatens safety.

Families

Families will be given information about the wellbeing dog and asked to sign consent for their child to participate and interact in visits. Educators will consult with families if they require further information or have concerns about the interaction. Educators will specifically discuss implementing the Living Safely with Dogs program. Risk benefits and risk minimisation for safety, cleanliness, allergies and fear will be shared in information to families.

Children that do not have consent will be guided towards other activities during this time.

Educators will support family understanding of the wellbeing dog visits by posting photos and information about the visits to the preschool Kinderloop page.

Children & Educators

Educators will implement the Living Safely with Dogs program.

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		<p>Educators are responsible for children at all times. Children are seated when the wellbeing dog enters the room and are reminded by educators about safe interactions. Children will be closely supervised and supported to remember safety behaviours when approaching and taking turns with the wellbeing dog. Children are supported by educators to not put their face close to the animal.</p> <p>Educators will have plans in place for children with known allergies.</p> <p>Educators ensure children wash their hands with soap and water after handling or patting.</p> <p>Children will not interact with the educational support dog during eating times.</p> <p>Children will remain in one environment for supervision purposes eg. all inside or all outside.</p> <p>Any high supervision experiences will be suspended and made safe whilst the wellbeing dog visits ie waterplay.</p> <p>Nominated supervisor and Preschool Supervisor</p> <p>Development of a risk assessment in consultation with WHS committee and preschool teacher.</p> <p>Risk assessment is reviewed when the procedure is reviewed.</p> <p>Procedure reviewed initially after three months and then yearly.</p>

Record of procedure review
Date of review and who was involved
9/11/2022 Carolyn Jones, Leanne McMaster, Shiralee Robinson and Miriam McKeown
Key changes made and reason/s why
Document was created
Record of communication of significant changes to relevant stakeholders
Procedure will be presented at the next P&C meeting by Annette Thomson and added to Kinderloop for parents/carers to view.