



# WILLIAMSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Dogs at School Policy



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school office 9397 1248.

### PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the rules and procedures we have in place in relation to dogs attending our school grounds.

### 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 **wellbeing dog** is a dog that has been suitably trained to provide animal-assisted wellbeing programs under the control of his/her handler.

A **handler** is a volunteer in the school who is responsible and in control of a wellbeing dog while on school grounds and when facilitating the animal wellbeing program.

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.

### Assistance dogs

Williamstown 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 and )
- 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. Williamstown 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.

### Pet dogs

Williamstown 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 Williamstown 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.

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.

If you choose to walk your dog to School, we ask that all dogs remain outside School grounds and more than three metres from School gates. We strongly encourage that the responsible adult always accompanies the dog. In the event of an incident, the onus is on the owner of the dog. Signage will be posted at all Williamstown Primary School entry gates to remind the community.

### Stray dogs

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

### Education

Given the prevalence of dogs within and around Williamstown, Williamstown Primary School adopts a positive and proactive stance about education on responsible pet ownership. Students in the junior years will be educated about responsible pet ownership and how to be safe around unfamiliar dogs. This will include a focus on:

- identifying times when we should leave dogs alone
- the warning signs given by dogs
- how to safely approach and greet a dog, with the owner's permission
- what to do if approached by an aggressive dog

The School will regularly utilise Compass communications to educate our families about safety around dogs, particularly those accompanying families to and from School. Students in upper years will have discussions on a needs basis.

Williamstown Primary School has an expectation that families will also provide positive education in responsible pet ownership and the safe approaching of dogs. This includes but is not limited to:

- if a child shows an interest in approaching a dog (both familiar and unfamiliar), parents should encourage the child to seek permission from the responsible owner first
- if permission is granted by an owner for a child to approach their dog, the owner should guide the child to do so safely
- should a child be handling their family dog, we encourage a responsible adult to guide other children who may show an interest in approaching the dog

## COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website (or insert other online parent/carer/student communication method)
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- [Williamstown PS Duty of Care Policy](#)
- [Williamstown PS Visitors Policy](#)

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	September 2018
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2026

Version Approval Date	Summary of changes	VRQA Requirement	DET Mandated Policy	School Council Input
September 2018	New policy	No	No	Consultation recommended but not required
November	Update	No	No	Consultation recommended but not required