

THERAPY DOGS AT HURSTBIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

PURPOSE

Support or Therapy dogs can provide great benefit to Staff and Student Wellbeing. This policy governs the Support Dog Program, ensuring the program maximises its full potential. This policy covers all aspects of having a dog in a school environment; careful management abiding by this policy ensures there is a very low risk of harm. Our therapy support dog will work within the school environment. She will come to work each day and when jacketed is working with students with anxiety, anger issues, as well as with student learning and communication skills.

AIMS:

K9 Support Therapy dogs become a unique part of helping with:

- Empathy
- Kindness towards others
- Reading
- Responsibility
- Control
- Lowering of instances of anger
- Lowering anxiety
- Meltdowns
- Communication
- And much more

IMPLEMENTATION:

Information about the Therapy Dog:

Chloe is a Golden Labrador. Chloe has been trained by K9 Support to become a Therapy Support Dog. Chloe has a natural ability to refocus students who may be feeling upset for a variety of reasons. Chloe will have a space in the office where she will spend time if she is not working with students. This will be her 'safe spot'. Chloe's training is ongoing. She has been thoroughly temperament tested and has been exposed to a range of experiences such as farm animals, attending sporting events, traffic, schools (both familiar and unfamiliar), retail shops, public transport and other dogs. Throughout the testing she has demonstrated a highly appropriate temperament for ongoing training and work as a Therapy Dog. Chloe is completely up to date with all medical and vaccination requirements. This will be maintained for her lifetime at the owners expense.

Context:

- Chloe is owned by Chris Tatnall, Hurstbridge Primary School's Principal. All costs associated with the dogs care, training, grooming, and medical expenses are the owners responsibility.
- Hurstbridge Primary School will cover the cost of a pet insurance policy to cover up to 80% of any accidents or emergencies occurred by the dog. The owner is responsible for any costs not covered by this policy eg, gap in any claims, or regular medical expenses. The cost of this policy will be the only cost to the school.
- Choe is a Labrador.

- Chloe will be based in the principal's office.
- Visitors to school will be informed of the dogs presence at the school reception.

Daily management of Chloe:

- Not allowed in school if unwell.
- Be under the supervision of an approved adult or trained student at all times.
- Continue to be trained as a therapy dog. This is ongoing and the owners expense.
- Be up to date with all vaccinations, worming and grooming.
- Will not be taken off the site without Chris Tatnall or his delegate except in emergencies.
- Will have a safe area inside the office and classroom.
- Chloe will wear a vest to ensure she is recognised as a therapy support dog when working in the school.

Student expectations:

- Will be reminded of appropriate behaviours around the dog.
- Will always be reminded to respect the dog and remain calm around her at all times.
- Be gentle and not make sudden movements.
- Not to put their face near the dog.
- Always approach the dog in a calm, slow manner.
- Do not disturb the dog while eating, drinking or sleeping.
- Never to feed the dog outside of training sessions.
- Food rewards only to be used during training.

Health and Safety:

- All persons should always wash or sanitise their hands after handling the dog.
- Any dog excrement to be cleaned and disposed of appropriately.
- Only Assistance Dogs (eg Seeing Eye, Hearing, etc) allowed on school premises unless other arrangements made with Principal.

If Dog is hurt or injured:

- Dog will be removed by Chris Tatnall or delegate calmly from the situation if required.
- Dog to be moved to her safe area.
- Chris to take Dog to the Vet if required: Greencross Vets in Hurstbridge.

Promotion and Support:

- Having a support dog is a positive benefit to the whole community.
- Hurstbridge Primary School will develop a web page to support Chloe and publicise her work at school.
- The school acknowledges the support of the owner in providing the dog, training and other costs.
- Any pet industry businesses who support Chloe with goods and services will be acknowledged on the schools website. Businesses will be informed about Chloe, her ownership and her role at school before Chloe accepts any donations.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- K9 Support. Therapy Dog Training. Tessa Stow. 31 Davies Rd, Warrenbayne, Vic. 57632471.
- <http://www.k9support.com.au/>
- Greencross Vets
- School Therapy Dogs <http://www.schooltherapydogs.org/>



- Dogs in the classroom <http://www.creativeteachingsite.com/dogs/dogs.html>
- Hurstbridge Primary School Dogs at School Policy

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	October 2021
Approved by	School Council on 19 th October 2021
Next scheduled review date	October 2023