



# PATTERSON LAKES PRIMARY SCHOOL

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P.O. Box 330, Patterson Lakes, 3197

Principal: Carole Mayes

Website: <http://www.patterson-lakes-ps.vic.edu.au>

## ANIMAL THERAPY POLICY

### RATIONALE

The objectives of this project are to improve teaching and learning practices related to Social and Emotional Learning competencies, and to gather evidence to show improvement in student outcomes. Activities with the dog will support this. If this project is successful, we expect to see improvements in student engagement to be clearly reflected in the data.

### AIMS

The aim of this project is to improve wellbeing and engagement across the school and assist identified students to build on positive relationships at Patterson Lakes Primary School. This will be achieved through improving socialisation and self-awareness skills that are a part of the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies. These competencies are linked to Victorian Curriculum standards and it is expected that all teachers cover these learning outcomes and are able to assess them, as per expectations related to the entire Victorian Curriculum. The program will be implemented school-wide on a trial basis.

### IMPLEMENTATION

This is a pilot program in place relating directly to Staff and Student Wellbeing. Partial funding was obtained by the School Focused Youth Service (SFYS) 2018-2019 Service Delivery (Family Life). SFYS will develop a evaluation tool, and collect outcome data. A policy governs the program, ensuring that the program maximises its full potential.

### About the Dog

Shadow is a toy poodle x schnauzer. Shadow has been trained with his owner, Ms Kim Morgan, by K9 Support to become a Therapy Dog. This is different to a service dog. Shadow has a natural ability to refocus students who may be feeling upset for a variety of reasons. Shadow will have a space in Room 14 where he will spend time if he is not working with students. This will be his 'safe spot'. His interactions to begin with will be based around showing students how to behave with them and practicing that interaction. Shadow's training is ongoing. He has been thoroughly temperament tested, and exposed to a range of experiences such as chickens, wheelchairs, ramps, traffic, schools (both familiar and unfamiliar) and other dogs. Throughout the testing, he has shown very low arousal, suggesting a highly appropriate temperament for ongoing training and work as a Therapy Dog.

### Health

Shadow is completely up to date with all medical and vaccination requirements. This will be maintained for his lifetime. Shadow will be regularly groomed and washed as part of his program at school.

### Risks in having a dog in a school environment

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.

### Context

- Shadow is owned by Ms Kim Morgan
- Shadow is a toy poodle x schnauzer
- Shadow will be based in Room 14
- Students will be educated in appropriate behaviour around Shadow and develop increased responsibility with handling and managing Shadow
- Visitors to the school will be informed of Shadow with signage at the school reception

### Daily Management

#### Shadow

- is not allowed at school if he is unwell
- will be kept on lead at all times
- be under the supervision of Ms Kim Morgan or a delegate at all times
- will continue to be trained as a therapy dog. This is ongoing
- be up to date with all vaccinations, worming and grooming
- will not be taken off the site without Ms Morgan's or his delegate in emergencies
- will have a safe area inside Room 14.
- will wear a K9 Support vest to ensure he is recognised as a therapy support dog

## Expectations

### Students

- will never have sole responsibility for Shadow or be left unsupervised around him
- will be reminded of appropriate behaviours around Shadow with each contact
- will always be reminded to respect Shadow and remain calm around him at all times
- will be gentle and not make sudden movements or attempts to physically contact Shadow
- will not to stare into the Shadow's eyes
- will request permission before touching Shadow
- will not to put his/her face near Shadow
- will always approach Shadow in a calm, slow manner and not touch Shadow until he is sitting and calm
- will not disturb Shadow while eating, drinking or sleeping
- will never feed Shadow
- will continue beneficial learning into Shadow's development
- will demonstrate collaboration of the Shadow's role with the whole school community, including; staff, parents, students, family members

### Health and Safety

- All persons should always wash his hands after handling Shadow
- Any dog excrement is to be cleaned and disposed of appropriately by Ms Kim Morgan or his delegate
- Only Assistance Dogs (e.g. Seeing Eye, Hearing, etc.) are allowed on school premises unless other arrangements have been made with the School Principal

### If Shadow is hurt or injured (accident or by student)

- Shadow will be removed by Ms Kim Morgan or his delegate calmly from the situation if required
- Shadow to be moved to his safe area
- Ms Kim Morgan to take Shadow to the Vet if required: Greencross VET, Springvale Road, Springvale
- The student's parents/carers are to be informed if harm is caused and a progression of consequences followed
- Incident protocols will follow injuries occurring on the school grounds
- Ms Kim Morgan to be notified immediately.
- Seek medical attention if required for any party injured.
- Inform all staff of the incident via email.
- A full investigation from Principal.
- Safe comfort buffer zone perimeter provided between the dog and the other party of 3 meters

### Support for Policy

- K9 Support. Therapy Dog Training. Tessa Stow. 31 Davies Rd, Warrenbayne, Vic. 0488 585771  
<http://www.k9support.com.au/>
- Vet – Greencross VET, Springvale Road, Springvale. Ph: 9546 5022
- School Focused Youth Service, Family Life. Ph. 8599 5433
- School Therapy Dogs <http://www.schooltherapydogs.org/>
- Dogs in the classroom <http://www.creativeteachingsite.com/dogs/dogs.html>

## EVALUATION

Guidelines are updated every 3 - 4 years as per DET recommendations.

## CERTIFICATION

This policy was ratified at the School Council Meeting held at Patterson Lakes Primary School, May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019.

Signed



School Council President

Signed



Principal