



EPSOM PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dog in School Policy (Buddy)

Epsom Primary School Statement

At Epsom Primary School we believe that all our students should learn in an environment that:

- Offers an extensive engaging learning program for all students
- Ensures that all students become literate and numerate to enable them to fully participate in the workforce and society
- Provides the opportunity for students to develop and extend their cultural, artistic and sporting achievements
 - Develops responsible, caring community members
- Prepares students to be technologically literate global citizens

Introduction

- The aim of this project is to improve wellbeing for students. This will be achieved through improving socialising skills 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.
- One class will be the target group for this project to begin with, and as the action progresses it will be implemented more broadly across the school.
- The objectives of this project are to improve teaching and learning practices related to SEL competencies, and to gather evidence to show improvement in student outcomes within a particular cohort of the school. If this project is successful we expect to see student knowledge and understanding to be clearly reflected in the data.

Overview

This is a pilot program in place relating directly to student wellbeing. This policy governs the program, ensuring that the program maximises it's full potential.

About the dog

Buddy is a 5 month old Labradoodle who is currently 47 cm high and weighs 13 kilograms, he has been part of the school community since he was 10 weeks old. Buddy has settled into the classroom extremely well surpassing all of Mr. Gargiulo's expectations, generally remaining calm and watching the children go about their daily learning tasks. Buddy has been an incredible asset to the classroom calming a large class of 27 students to a point where daily learning is noticeably more settled. Buddy has additionally assisted students in entering school for the day who were displaying signs of distress and calmed children who have been hurt or upset in the schoolyard. Buddy has a natural ability to neutralise and distract students who may be feeling upset for a variety of reasons. Several students in the classroom have greatly developed and matured whilst Buddy has been developing. Initially for Buddy's induction and safety he was secluded to a penned off section at the front of the classroom and students were encourage to ignore him being there. At around 16 weeks of age Buddy was allowed to

roam the classroom with his safe area still in the same place. Buddy soon learnt that when he is in the classroom he is there for a reason. Buddy does not attempt to eat any of the student's food during food breaks. A recent visit of Buddy's breeders made the following observations:

- Buddy is 5 months of age
- Buddy initially displayed recognition and affection towards the breeder
- The breeder was immensely impressed with how quickly buddy resumed his work mode and was amazed to see how calm he was while a large number of students moved around the classroom and transited to another class
- The breeder commented Buddy displayed age appropriate behavior.
- The breeder was confident Buddy's natural ability will be enhanced with further structured training

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

- Dog is owned by Mr Gargiulo
- Vet costs and general expenses are paid by the owner
- Dog is a Labradoodle, he has been chosen for his temperament, intelligence and his hypoallergenic non-moulting coat
- Dog will be based in Mr Gargiulo's classroom
- Student's in Mr Gargiulo's classroom will be educated on dog management, having a gradual release of responsibilities assessed by Mr Gargiulo
- Visitors to school will be informed of Dog at the school reception, they will receive a small leaflet explaining Dog's role and requirements

Daily management of Dog

- Not allowed in school if unwell
- Will be kept on lead when moving between classrooms
- Be under the supervision of Mr Gargiulo or Dog monitors at all times
- Continue to be trained in obedience, including release time inside the school grounds
- Be up to date with all vaccinations, worming and grooming
- Will not be taken off the site without Mr Gargiulo
- Will have a safe area inside the classroom and outside the classroom
- Dog will wear training vest to ensure he is recognised as a therapy support dog

Student expectations

- Will not have sole responsibility for Dog
- Will be reminded of appropriate behaviours around Dog with each contact
- Will always be reminded to respect Dog and remain calm around him at all times
- Be gentle and not make sudden movements or attempts to physically contact to Dog
- Not to stare into Dog's eyes
- Not to put their face near Dog
- Always approach Dog standing
- Always approach Dog in a calm slow manner
- Do not disturb Dog while eating, drinking or sleeping
- Never to feed Dog
- Continue beneficial learning into Dog's development
- Demonstrate collaboration of Dog's role with the whole school community, including; staff, parents, students, family members

- Dog pack to be carried by Dog monitors containing; excrement bags, rubber gloves and hand sanitiser
- Vests to be worn by Dog monitors, identifying them
- Will abide by the rule 'we don't hurt the Dog'

Health and Safety

- All persons should always wash their hands after handling Dog
- Any dog excrement to be cleaned and disposed of appropriately by Mr Gargiulo or Dog monitors
- Where possible - External gates to the school to remain closed at all times while Dog is on site

If Dog is hurt or injured (accident or by student)

- Dog will be removed by Mr Gargiulo calmly from the situation if required
- Dog to be moved to his safe area
- Mr Gargiulo to take Dog to the Vet if required, Bendigo Animal Hospital
- Parents informed if harm caused by student
- Follow up investigating by Mr Gargiulo, Mrs Coulter and parent council representative (School Council)

Incident protocols

- Mr Gargiulo to be notified immediately, documentation required
- Parents to be notified immediately
- Seek medical attention if required
- Inform all staff of the incident via email
- A full investigation from Principal and SC

Resolution of personalities protocol

- Safe comfort buffer zone perimeter provided between the dog and the other party of 3 meters

Support for policy

Lead the Way (therapy dog training) - <http://www.ltw.com.au/>

La Maisons Labradoodles (continued breed advice) <http://www.lamaisonlabradoodles.com/>

Assistance Dogs Australia (advice and training) <http://www.assistancedogs.org.au/>

Vet - Bendigo Animal Hospital, 294 Napier Street Bendigo 3550 | (03) 5443-3322

<http://www.bendigoanimalhospital.com.au/>

Policy written by B Gargiulo

Ratified:

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