



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Lara Lake Primary School on 5282 1261.

PURPOSE

This policy sets out the circumstances in how a school wellbeing dogs will be used at Lara Lake Primary School. We aim for the responsible implementation of a structured program through which school wellbeing dogs will be used to assist the school community in experiencing connectedness, developing links to learning throughout the school community, and helping to develop students who are socially adept, respectful, just, and appreciative of diversity.

DETAILS – SCHOOL OWNED DOG

The Wellbeing Dog is to be used to support students with trauma, anxiety, communication, emotional regulation, resilience, sensory processing, stress management, emotional literacy, school attendance, leadership and behaviour.

The dog will be used by staff who have participated in the Dogs Connect training, which will include how to respond to students who have a fear of dogs. A thoroughly considered and gradually implemented program involving the school dog interacting with staff and students on many levels will be mapped out.

Modelled practices where teaching and learning can be linked to the love, care, and connection of our school dog will be implemented through the program.

The Wellbeing Dog will be used in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, working one on one with students, whole class activities, small groups and whole school activities.

The Wellbeing Dog breed is an Australian Cobberdog which are a hypoallergenic (doesn't shed hair) breed of dog.

The school Wellbeing Dog will live with a designated handler (Lara Lake Staff Member) and be brought to work each day.

DETAILS – PRIVATELY OWNED DOG

The privately owned Wellbeing Dog is to be used to support students in the same manner as the school owned Wellbeing Dog.

The dog will be used by staff who have participated in the Dogs Connect training and the Facility Training Session provided by Guide Dogs Victoria (GDV) on placement of a suitable dog. Commands and routines already established for the dog will be required to be used by staff and students interacting with the dog (as detailed in Handbook 1 & 2 provided by GDV).

The privately owned Wellbeing Dog breed is a reclassified Labrador provided by Guide Dogs Victoria through the Therapy Dog for Facilities application process. The dog will have completed training and socialisation as part of the guide dog training program.

This privately owned Wellbeing Dog will live with the owner and designated handler (Lara Lake Staff Member) and be brought to work each day.



For both the school owned and privately owned Wellbeing Dogs, the school will:

- Ensure that students are actively supervised when interacting with the dogs.
- Demonstrate and explicitly teach safe interaction options to students - this refers to walking on lead, general interactions, and sanitising after handling.
- Always allow time for the dogs to wake up, avoiding sudden awakening.
- The dogs will always be led by attachment to lead when students and/or staff are walking with him/her unless deemed safe and appropriate by staff with responsibility for him/her.
- Consider that the dogs need to be in classrooms and school buildings and make decisions on where the dogs can play, roll, run, frolic based on this consideration.
- Be proactive when considering or having awareness of potential hazards or dangers to the dogs - make decisions based on the priority being safety for the dogs.
- Exercise caution and base decisions about managing the dogs during any given scenario on common sense and safety.
- Never allow the dogs to 'feed' or have bones or similar in classrooms or around students.
- Ensure the dogs will be toileted at scheduled breaks in an appropriate outdoor area which is not used by students. The handler will clean up and dispose accordingly.
- Provide the dogs with adequate exercise outside of the school day.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2024
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	June 2026