



DOGS AT HEATHMONT COLLEGE

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the rules and procedures we have in place in relation to dogs attending our school grounds. To explain to our school community how we use dogs as animal assisted therapy at the school.

POLICY

Assistance dogs

Heathmont College 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 alleviate the effects of a disability (eg seeing eye dogs)
- 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. Heathmont College 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.

Therapy or Wellbeing dogs

Heathmont College has a wellbeing dog Frances that attends school on a daily basis. The dog works in three spaces across the school and has regular rest breaks and locations built into the daily routine.

Protocols for working with Monty:

- 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.

- Three areas 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.
 - Well-being, Integration and Study Areas
- 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.

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 the staff member
- Vet costs and general expenses are paid by the owner
- Dog is a labradoodle, she has been chosen for her temperament, intelligence and hypoallergenic low-moulting coat
- Dog will be based in the staff members classroom/office
- Student's in the classroom will be educated on dog management, having a gradual release of responsibilities
- Visitors to school will be informed of Dog at the school reception, they will receive a small leaflet explaining Dog's role and requirements

About Frances:

Frances is a standard labradoodle. She will grow to approximately 30kgs and stand 40-50cm high. Her fur will be a woolly/wavy coat and she is a minimal shedder. She will shed some of her fur. She is obedience training with Eastern Companion Dogs and is wellbeing training with Dogs Connect. The ultimate goal is to integrate into the community and help people achieve mental health success.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact the College on 9871 4888.

Pet dogs

Heathmont College is not a public place, and our principal has the authority to permit or decline entry to school grounds and impose conditions of entry.

Dogs permitted with conditions

Whilst Heathmont College 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, we have in place a number of rules that we expect all families to follow if they wish to bring their pet dog onto school grounds:

- pet dogs must be leashed at all times and in the control of a responsible adult
- pet dogs must not be tied up on school grounds or left unaccompanied

- families that bring dogs to school that exhibit signs of aggressive behaviour, bark, or jump may be asked to leave.

The principal has the authority to prohibit certain dogs from school grounds or modify this policy to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff, students and members of our school community at any time.

Stray dogs

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

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

[Duty of Care Policy](#)

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was last updated on 26 May 2021 and is scheduled for review in May 2022.