

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the rules and procedures we have in place in relation to dogs attending our school grounds.

POLICY

Assistance dogs

Hume Valley School 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 to 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. Hume Valley School 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. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact the Principal.

Animal Assisted Intervention - Therapy Dogs

An important component of Hume Valley's School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) approach is the provision of two Therapy Dogs.

Two Therapy Dogs, Gracie and Paulie, come to school each day under the supervision of their carers/teachers. The role of therapy dogs at Hume Valley School is to react and respond to our students and their environment, under the guidance and direction of staff working as their handlers. Gracie and Paulie work at Hume Valley School to support students with social and emotional learning needs. For example, an individual might be encouraged to gently pat or talk to a dog to teach sensitive touch and help the students to be calm.

Students working with therapy dogs experience increased motivation for learning, resulting in improved outcomes. Research into the effects of therapy dogs in schools is showing a range of benefits including:

- Increase in school attendance
- Gains in confidence

Decreases in learner anxiety behaviours resulting in improved learning outcomes, such as increases in reading and writing levels

Positive changes towards learning and improved motivation, and enhanced relationships with peers and teachers due to experiencing trust and unconditional love from a therapy dog. This in turn helps students learn how to express their feelings and enter into more trusting relationships.

The primary concern of the school is the welfare of the animals at all times, including the provision of care during weekends and school holidays (if applicable) and veterinary care when needed.

Pet dogs

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

Whilst Hume Valley School 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, pet dogs are not permitted on school grounds under any circumstances.

Stray dogs

Unaccompanied or stray dogs sighted at our school should be reported immediately to the Front Office staff. 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

Therapy Dog - Gracie & Paulie Timetable Term 1, 2020 *(as of 5/3/20)*

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
GRACIE	Juniors	Primaries/Middles	PreCAL	VCAL	Seniors
PAULIE	<i>Media & Design</i>	<i>Media & Design</i>	Seniors or Secondaries	<i>Media & Design</i>	<i>Media & Design</i>

Recess/Lunch times

- Gracie/Paulie do not go out the playground at recess/lunch times with students.
- During recess/lunch please take Gracie/Paulie to office court yard for play/water/food.
- Please collect Gracie/Paulie from office courtyard promptly after recess/lunch times.

Sub Schools *Sub school leader to manage classroom allocation of Gracie/Paulie for the day*

- Please collect Gracie/Paulie from the office at 9am.
- Take with you - water bowl and lead/harness.
- Gracie/Paulie are to be supervised by an adult at all times (not to be left alone with students at any time).
- Gracie/Paulie are to be walked with dual lead (students are not to walk Gracie/Paulie on their own).
- Give Gracie/Paulie water and take outside for regular bathroom breaks.
- **Ensure students are being kind – not antagonising or hurting them in any way e.g. pulling, poking.**

REVIEW PERIOD

Ratified at School Council:	June 2020
Review Date:	June 2023