

DOGS AT SCHOOL POLICY

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

Brandon Park Primary School understands its obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Vic) 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 (for example, 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. Brandon Park Primary 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.

School Service Dogs

Brandon Park Primary has two trained service dogs who visit the school regularly. Many students have participated in the training of these dogs, whilst all are familiar with them. Whilst these dogs are used to provide comfort and support, we understand that not all children are comfortable around them. For this reason we have an 'opt-out' system whereby parents and carers can stipulate if they would prefer their child not to have contact with our dogs. This will be recorded on Compass for staff access.

Pet dogs

Whilst Brandon Park Primary 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.

Our school community is diverse and may include people that are allergic or uncomfortable around dogs. We are also conscious of the health hazards that may be posed by dogs.

We ask that families please leave their pet dogs at home or safely tether them outside school grounds when attending our school or school events.

Stray dogs

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

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request
- Made available in soft copy for staff on Microsoft Teams
- Discussed at staff meetings as required
- Reminders in our school newsletter – Brandon Buzz

REVIEW CYCLE

Policy last reviewed	May 2021
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2024