

## DOGS ON GROUNDS POLICY

### RATIONALE

Brunswick South West Primary School (BSWPS) understands the important role that pets - and dogs, in particular - play in our community, and the positive impact dogs can have on family life. For many in our community, dogs are an important and cherished part of the family. There are great benefits to walking to and from school in a family group with a dog. Dogs can bring enormous joy, and educational benefits too. However, owning a dog is also a serious responsibility. BSWPS acknowledges that some in our community find contact with dogs stressful, even frightening, and some people suffer allergic reactions to dogs. While we endeavour to educate children at BSWPS about being safe around dogs – particularly unfamiliar dogs – it remains the responsibility of adult dog owners to ensure that their dog never poses a risk to anyone in our community.

### 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

BSWPS 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 including those who are being trained by BSWPS staff who are undertaking an accredited assistance animal program (such as Seeing Eye Dogs Australia). Our 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. BSWPS 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.

#### Pet dogs

BSWPS is not a public place, and our Principal has the authority and responsibility to permit or decline entry to school grounds and impose conditions of entry to ensure the safety of the community.

Whilst BSWPS values the role dogs play in our community and the many benefits of family dog ownership, we also need to ensure that our school remains a safe and inclusive place for everyone. Therefore, we expect that if families bring their pet dog on to school grounds, they will observe the following rules:

- Pet dogs must be leashed at all times and under the control of a responsible adult.

- Pet dogs must not be tied up on school grounds or left unaccompanied.
- Dog owners must remove dog excrement from within school grounds.
- Dogs are not permitted in classrooms or other school buildings unless approval has been granted by the Principal.
- Families that bring pet dogs to school that exhibit signs of aggressive behaviour, bark excessively, or jump up on people will be asked to leave.
- Dog owners must be familiar with their legal responsibilities and be aware that the school takes no responsibility for the behaviour or actions of their dogs.
- Dog owners must abide by the Moreland City Council on leash laws, as follows:
  - A Council order, made under the Domestic Animals Act 1994, requires dogs to be kept on a leash at all times when in public places.
  - This law does not apply to a Declared Dangerous, Menacing or Restricted Breed Dog or a Greyhound, which must meet the restraint requirements, specified under the Domestic Animal Act 1994.

The school's priority is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff, students and members of our school community. Therefore, we expect dog owners to keep their dogs at home if there is any risk of their dog becoming aggressive at school towards humans or other dogs. 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 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.

## **RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

### **BSWPS Visitors to School Policy**

### **BSWPS Duty of Care Policy**

The following Moreland City Council website outlines local council regulations regarding dog ownership and contains an extensive list of Dog Parks:

<https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/events-recreation/parks-and-trails/off-leash-parks-for-dog-walking/>

## **REVIEW PERIOD**

This policy was last updated on June 2020 and is scheduled for review in June 2023