



# DOGS AT SCHOOL POLICY

## **Rationale**

Inverloch Primary School recognises the positive influence that pets, including dogs, can have in the community and in particular, on a child's life. While the school appreciates this and values pet ownership as an educational experience, it also acknowledges that other children and adults can find contact with dogs stressful.

Inverloch Primary Schools increasing enrolments and congestion at drop off and pick times and there has been an increase in the amount of dogs entering the schools grounds.

The school is a shared space and not all students and adults are comfortable around dogs or accept their place in a school grounds around other students, buildings and grounds. Likewise dogs can feel excited, unsafe or insecure and this can lead to unpredictability and accidents such as falls and dog bites.

This policy has been designed to ensure the safety of all students, adults and animals while supporting the choice of families within the community to walk their dog to and from school.

## **Purpose**

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

## **Goals**

- This policy aims to take into consideration the needs and expectations of all members of the school community
- To communicate the rules and expectations of dog owners and dogs entering the school property.
- To minimise the risk of accident, injury or insecurity of people or animals within the school grounds.
- To follow existing council by-laws already cover issues such as dangerous dogs, dog restraint and the need for owners to pick up their dog's excrement.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all school staff, volunteers, students, parents/carers, family members and visitors to the schools.

## **Definitions:**

School grounds- for the purpose of this policy, school grounds are defined as the area and buildings bounded by the front main building and the north, east and west fences

Assistance Dogs-dogs trained to help alleviate the effects of a disability.

## **Implementation**

### **Pet Dogs**

Inverloch School is not a public place, and the Principal has the authority of the Education Minister to permit or decline entry to school grounds and impose conditions of entry. Whilst Inverloch PS 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 in regards to dogs on school grounds:

- No dogs will be allowed or tethered on the school grounds and near pedestrian thoroughfares so students can pass safely and securely.
- 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.
- Staff can request that dog owners remove their dog from the school grounds at any time.
- Incidents involving dog bites or injuries to children, adults or other animals will be reported to the Bass Coast or South Gippsland Shire.

**Assistance Dogs** Inverloch Primary School understands their 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 (e.g. 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. Inverloch Primary Schools 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 school Principal.

**Educational / Wellbeing Purposes** Inverloch Primary School supports Responsible Pet Ownership and this is offered each year. The Educator and his/her dog will be permitted on site to present and practice pet ownership understandings.

Some schools have therapy dogs that supports students. Inverloch Primary School will develop a separate policy if this becomes the case. The use of dog for this purpose is an exception to the on site rules and expectations.

### **Easter Fair**

Dogs will be permitted on school grounds with signage at all entries stating the expectations of entry. The Principal can exercise the right, as the delegate of the Minister, to ask dog owners to leave if required.

### **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.

School Council Approval	<i>Inverloch PS</i>	<i>2019</i>
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