

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

NARANGA SCHOOL POLICY

Rationale

Animals in schools can provide a rich learning experience for all students. Naranga School values the benefits of pet ownership, and as such we have a responsibility to demonstrate appropriate care and respect. The school's primary duty of care is to our students when there is an animal in the school. It is recognised that some people have a fear of animals, and students and staff need to feel safe while on school grounds.

Aims

- To provide a school environment which is safe for students, parents, staff and visitors.
- To provide the students with first-hand experience of caring for animals, whilst at the same time ensuring that students realise and meet the obligations in caring for them.
- To provide support to students who may benefit from distraction and/or impartial attention from an animal as part of a broader strategy of student behaviour supports.

Guidelines for Implementation

- For an animal to be identified as a regular component to student support at Naranga School, approval from the Principal and endorsement by School Council must be achieved (see Appendix 1).
- Service animals (such as Guide dogs and police dogs) and School Council approved animals will have access to the school grounds at all times.
- As a general guide, unauthorised animals are not permitted in the school grounds at any time.
- Anyone wishing to bring animals into the school should contact the Principal to seek permission.
- Upon permission, animals visiting classrooms should be brought into the school ground either in an appropriate carrier or on a lead.
- Any School Council approved animal will be under the supervision of school staff.
- Any School Council approved animal will be provided with a quiet place away from students.
- Any school council approved animal will be cared for by an appropriate person on weekends and school holidays.
- The school will annually commit to educating the school community on relevant topics/information regarding appropriate engagement with the particular animal/s approved to be part of the school community.
- The school will ensure School Council approved animals have appropriate insurance and inoculations.
- A risk assessment will be conducted on any animal which is approved by School Council as part of the school.
- A focus of animals in school is to assist students to:
 - reduce anxiety;
 - take a break by spending time with the animal within the school grounds;
 - relax and calm down;
 - support reluctant school starters;
 - reduce frequency and duration of inappropriate student behaviour;

- provide companionship;
- assist with reading programs;
- encourage verbal communication;
- extend learning opportunities.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the school's four-year review cycle.

Appendix 1

The principal or principal's delegate is responsible for:

- approving and seeking School Council approval for the use of animals in an educational program and ensuring that any use is conducted in accordance with this policy.
- ensuring arrangements are in place for the care of animals including weekends and school holidays.
- ensure evaluation and emergency plans include information and procedures to safeguard the welfare of animals in the event of flooding, cyclones, fire, etc.
- implementing appropriate procedures to limit the the presence of unauthorised animals on the school premises. This includes reasonable measures to ensure the health and safety of students, staff and visitors and where appropriate having animal/s removed e.g. by contacting the relevant council or wildlife authority.
- ensure that the school community is aware that animals may only be brought to school with the prior approval of the principal or their nominated delegate. Service animals used by people with disabilities are exempt from this requirement; however, principals must manage the presence of service animals to ensure the ongoing health and safety of students, staff and visitors.
- determining, in consultation with the school community, defined animal-free areas within the school.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in **December 2016**