



ANIMALS AT SCHOOL POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Gembrook Primary School Office.

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PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the rules and procedures we have in place in relation to dogs, other domestic pets, farm animals and wildlife on school grounds.

To provide a school environment, which is safe for students, is practical and balances the rights of individuals within the school's duty of care toward all students, staff, and community.

To explain to the school community the guidelines we follow for teaching with animals and having classroom pets.

SCOPE

Understandings:

Young children have under-developed judgement when it comes to approaching and handling animals.

Some members of the school community experience anxiety or fear when an unfamiliar animal is present.

Definitions

A **pet dog** relates to any dog that is privately owned in the community for companionship, rather than as a support function that requires specific skills or training.

A **stray dog** is any dog that is not accompanied by their owner.

POLICY

1. Pet dogs

Gembrook Primary 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 Gembrook 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, we have in place several guidelines that we expect all families to follow if they wish to bring their pet dog onto school grounds:

- Pet dogs must be leashed at all times and in the control of a responsible adult.
- Pet dogs must not be tied up on school grounds or left unaccompanied.
- Families that bring dogs to school that exhibit signs of aggressive behaviour, bark, or jump may be asked to remove the dog from school premises.
- Pet dogs should be kept away from areas where large groups of students are gathered eg. sports carnivals, the pickup zone.

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.

2. Stray dogs or other domestic or farm animals

- Unaccompanied or stray dogs or other domestic or farm animals, sighted at our school should be reported immediately to the school office.
- Domestic animals on the school grounds will be contained where it is safe to do so.
- Owners of domestic animals will be contacted to collect these animals if the owner is known. If reasonable unsuccessful attempts have been made to locate the owner, known or unknown, the local municipal council will be contacted to remove the animal from the school grounds to ensure staff and students remain safe at school.

3. Wildlife

- Consideration of student and animal safety will be taken into account when wildlife is found on the school grounds.
- Wildlife that is considered a threat to student safety will be assessed for the safest method of capture and removal; this may involve the shire council, specialist wildlife handlers such as snake catchers or the local vet.
- Students will be kept away from areas where dangerous wildlife are located until the removal process has been completed.
- Wildlife that is considered non-threatening and is in the 'out of bounds' areas such as the local endangered Southern Brown Bandicoots, will be undisturbed.

4. Teaching with Animals

- When planning to use animals for any purpose in a school, our teachers will consider the ethical and welfare issues involved.
- All teachers at Gembrook Primary School will adhere to the [Victoria's animal welfare codes of practice](#) for keeping a range of species and animal related activities.
- We understand that animals for educational purposes can only be justified when there are no alternative, non-animal methods that would achieve the same result.
- Teachers will also ensure that only the smallest number of animals are used and that the impact on animal welfare is minimised. Our teachers will take into account the animals ability to experience pain and distress.
- For animal use in teaching to be justified, the proposed use must meet the following requirements (known as the 3Rs):



- Replacement: Where possible animals should be replaced by models, digital learning or other suitable methods.
 - Reduction: Use no more than the minimum number of animals. However, this should not be at the expense of greater suffering of individual animals.
 - Refinement: Activities must minimise handling, discomfort, distress or pain in animals.
- Rehoming plans must be considered from the start of the planning stage. At end of their use in teaching, animals should be rehomed with the focus on 'a home for life' if possible.

5. Classroom Pets

- Any teacher wishing to keep an animal for non-invasive classroom observation must seek prior approval from the Principal
- If wildlife species are considered the teacher must ensure that the necessary permits are obtained, maintained and displayed.
- [Victoria's animal welfare codes of practice](#) must be followed.

6. Planned visits of animals to the school grounds:

- Assistance dogs will have access to the school at all times.
- 'Story Dog' trained dogs will be permitted into designated school buildings under the supervision of their owners to carry out the story dog program.
- Visits of pets to classrooms or the school grounds must be organised in advance with the supervising teacher to allow time for a safety plan to be developed.
- All pet animals brought into the school grounds during school hours will be contained in a pet carrier or for larger animals on a lead.
- Owners are responsible for the cleanup and removal of their pet's faeces and urine.
- When making decisions regarding access of animals, consideration will be given to activities which enhance student learning within the curriculum and the development of a safety plan.
- All parents and community members will be made aware of these school rules and the safety reasons supporting them.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Discussed in student forums
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

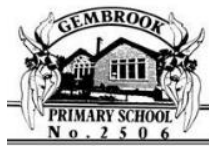
RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Duty of Care and *Visitors* policies

[Wildlife in schools | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

[Australian animal welfare standards and guidelines | Animal welfare | Animal Welfare Victoria | Livestock and animals | Agriculture Victoria](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL



Policy last reviewed	July 2023
Consultation	Staff
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 2027