



# Poynter Primary School

## COMPANION DOG GUIDELINES

Poynter Primary School is committed to creating a learning environment that enables students to fulfill their academic, creative, social and physical potential. The aim of having a Companion Dog onsite at Poynter is to support social and emotional well-being for students and staff. Personal and Social Capabilities, such as self-awareness and self-management are embedded in the Western Australian Curriculum. There is a growing body of research supporting the benefits of dogs for therapy, companionship and emotional well-being. Students also learn to build empathy and care for animals, safety around animals and understanding and respect of animals.

The dog onsite at Poynter is named Lola. She is a Cavoodle who has been part of a Poynter's community since she was 12 weeks old. Lola was slowly integrated into classes, commencing with the senior students, then short periods in junior classes. She has settled into the school setting extremely well, surpassing all our expectations, remaining calm and watching students go about their daily learning tasks. Lola has been an incredible asset to Poynter. Lola has assisted anxious and distressed students to enter school for the day, or after recess/lunch as required. Lola has a natural ability to neutralise and distract students who may be feeling upset for a variety of reasons.

Lola provides a safe, fun and non-judgemental space for students to practice their oral reading. Students enjoy reading their work and books to Lola and enjoy visiting Lola when showcasing their learning in the Principal's office. Students can request to walk Lola, with an adult, during a brain break in learning, or as a reward incentive. This has proved successful on multiple occasions for disengaged students.

## RISKS OF HAVING A DOG IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

This policy covers all aspects of having a dog in a school environment; careful management abiding by this policy ensures there is a very low risk of harm. In 2023 the Poynter Board discussed and approved a Companion Dog onsite. North Metro Education Office has been informed of the Companion Dog onsite.

## CONTEXT

- Dog Lola is owned by Principal, Lisa Wade.
- Vet costs and general expenses are paid by the owner.
- Lola is a Cavoodle, chosen for her gentle, even-temperament, intelligence and her hypoallergenic non-moulting coat.
- Lola will be based in the Administration building.
- All students will be educated on dog management.
- School reception signage for visitors to school notifying of Companion Dog onsite.
- Signage outside of school to be changed from 'No dogs onsite'.



## DAILY MANAGEMENT OF DOG

- Will wear a pink harness with her name labelled and be kept on lead in classrooms, when moving between classrooms and when walked on the oval.
- Be under the supervision of staff.



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- Continue to be trained in obedience.
- Is up to date with all vaccinations, worming and grooming.
- Has regular vet checks at Floreat Vet.
- Will have a safe area inside the classroom and outside the classroom.
- Has regular walk/run breaks and rest times.
- Lola's bed, fresh water and treats are kept in the Principal's office
- Not allowed in school if unwell.

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

- Will not have sole responsibility for dog.
- Will be reminded of appropriate behaviours around dog with each contact.
- Will be reminded to respect dog and remain calm around her at all times.
- Be gentle and not make sudden movements or attempts at physical contact to dog.
- Always approach dog standing.
- Always approach dog in a calm slow manner.
- Do not disturb dog while eating, drinking or sleeping.
- Never to feed dog.
- Continue beneficial learning into dog's development.
- Demonstrate collaboration of dog's role with the school community.
- Opt out any time.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Washing of hands after handling dog, before eating.
- Any dog excrement to be cleaned and disposed of appropriately by Principal or staff member.
- Dog remains on a lead, unless in Admin offices with doors closed.
- Students view dog awareness video in class. Teachers may access RSPCA Aware portal.
- RSPCA visit for students.
- First Aid kits in all classes and medical packs in office.

## IF DOG IS HURT OR INJURED (ACCIDENT OR BY STUDENT)

- Dog will be calmly removed by Principal.
- Dog to be moved to her safe area.
- Principal to take dog to the vet if required.
- Parents informed if harm caused by student.
- Follow up investigating by the Principal.



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## INCIDENT PROTOCOLS

- If dog not with Principal, Principal to be notified immediately, documentation required.
- Parents to be notified immediately.
- Seek medical attention if required.
- Inform all staff of the incident via email.
- A full investigation by the Principal.
- Lodge Critical Incident.

## SUPPORT FOR GUIDELINES

- Lead the Way (therapy dog training) - <http://www.ltw.com.au/>
- Assistance Dogs Australia (advice and training) <https://www.assistedogs.org.au/>
- RSPCA AWARE <https://www.rspcawa.org.au/aware-program>
- Vet – The Floreat Vet, 438 Cambridge St, Floreat WA 6014, (08) 9383 7773