



# Seeing Eye Dogs in Schools

## Policy

Policy review team members: Marie Boundy, Bev Harvey, Kim Wheeler, Donna Wheatley, Dean Charge, Jane Herring, Kate Eadie

This policy was last ratified by School Council on 14/12/20

### Rationale:

This policy supports employees to have the opportunity to be a carer for a Seeing Eye Dogs (SED) pup/dog in training. Carers play a vital role in training Seeing Eye Dogs (SED) to support people who are blind or have low vision to live the life they choose.

### Aims:

To implement an arrangement that is mutually comfortable and appropriate for employers, employees, Mt Eliza PS students, Seeing Eye Dogs Australia and the SED pup/dog in training.

### Implementation:

It is up to the carer of the SED pup/dog to take full responsibility for the SED pup/dog while in the school environment and respect all surrounding work areas.

- The employee/carers of the SED pup/dog will first talk with the Principal to ensure that they can fulfil both their work and SED Carer responsibilities.
- The SED pup/dog must be registered with SED admin, with all registration forms completed and immunisation history to be up to date and documented.
- Carers must ensure the SED pup/dog is registered with the carer's local council prior to commencement at school.
- At least 5 days' notice will be provided to the school community before a SED pup/dog can be bought onsite. Any feedback from staff, parents and students will be addressed before the SED pup/dog can be brought onsite.

#### ***Communication about the SED pup/dog to the School Community prior to commencement of caring:***

- Carer to arrange notification in the school newsletter of the impending SED pup/dog
  - When the SED pup/dog has its coat on it is 'working':
    - Please do not pat or distract the pup/dog as it is learning to become a Seeing Eye Dog
  - When the SED pup/dog has its coat off it is 'not working':
    - Students can ask the Carer for permission to pat the SED pup/dog (Students must wash hands after patting the pup/dog)
    - SED pup/dog play 'mouthing' may occur while patting and the carer should explain what this is to the students
  - Inform students of expectations
    - Please do not stare at or disturb a SED pup/dog in crate or while tethered, as they are learning to be calm and quiet as part of their training
    - Please do not to encourage a SED pup/dog to jump, play tug of war, throw sticks or a ball, as these behaviours are not allowed for Seeing Eye Dogs in training
    - Students cannot take control or be left alone with the puppy for the safety of the student and the pup
    - The Carer is the only person who can give food and drink to a SED pup/dog, unless student assistance is requested by the Carer
    - No human food can be given to a SED pup/dog, as the pup/dog is on a planned diet and additional food or drink can make the pup/dog sick



- Carer to be aware of student allergies to SED pup, if applicable
- Carer to be aware of student with dog aversion, if applicable
- Provide signage to inform the community of MEPS involvement in the program

**When on site, the Primary Carer** will follow the Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs training guidelines for the SED pup/dog, in addition to the following workplace guidelines:

- Wear SED volunteer identification lanyard
- SED pups/dogs are to be kept on a lead while in the School environment and should not be allowed to roam freely.
- SED pups/dogs are not allowed to get up on any desks or furniture within the School.
- SED pups/dogs are not to be left unattended; it is the carer's responsibility to keep their SED pup/dog with them or find another willing carer as part of the corporate support crew arrangement.
- In the event that any mess is created by the SED pup/dog, the carer must immediately clean the area to ensure a hygienic workplace. The Carer is to wash their hands after removal.
- The Carer must ensure the SED pup/dog has regular exercise and toilet breaks (as prescribed by the training guidelines for the SED pup/dog).
- Carer to ensure the SED pup/dog has been fed as prescribed by the guidelines for the SED pup/dog. SED approved treats/snacks may be provided by the Carer.
- Employees are to provide their own water bowl for their SED pup/dog and approved toys.
- SED pups/dogs are not to be dressed up in any costumes. They may only wear Seeing Eye Dogs coats/jackets/harnesses prescribed by the training guidelines for the SED pup/dog).
- SED pups/dogs are **not** to interact with each other or pet dogs in the workplace. Even if the coat is off.
- If Carers wish for the SED pup/dog to interact with other SED pups/pet dogs, this must be done outside of the workplace with the coat off.
- SED pups/dogs are to be kept on appropriate length tethers underneath the Carer's desk to discourage interaction with other passing SED pups/dogs/pet dogs.
- A crate must be provided for the SED pup/dog which is a safe and secure place for the SED pup/dog to rest or when you are away from your desk if the pup/dog is sleeping and not tethered.
- No one is to ever leave a SED pup/dog in a vehicle.
- Spare dog clean-up supplies must be available in case of indoor accidents.
- The Seeing Eye Dogs team can also provide onsite training for the School support crew in addition to the training for the primary Carer.
- Carers are to ensure that they comply with relevant care guidelines provided to them for the SED pup/dog by Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs.
- Give the Seeing Eye Dogs pup/dog in training quiet time when necessary

If a Carer identifies a conflict between the SED pup/dog care guidelines and school policies/procedures, the Carer is to speak with the Principal to suitably rectify the conflict.

**Liability:**

The SED Carer is responsible for any injury or damages to a person or another pet as a result of having the SED pup/dog in the office and shall take responsibility for any expense incurred.

**Training:**

Training opportunities for employees wanting to learn how to behave and interact around dogs/cats in the School can be arranged.

## **Evacuation Procedure:**

The Health and Safety of employees, and SED pups/dogs is a priority for Mt Eliza Primary School.

In case of an evacuation, employees with SED pups/dogs will be treated in the same manner as people with disabilities. On the activation of an alarm the SED Carer must:

- Immediately make sure that the SED pup/dog is secured either in a carry cage or on a lead.
- Take the SED pup/dog to the evacuation space and wait for instructions from the wardens.

## **Limitations and Conditions**

- Mt Eliza PS reserves the right to amend the Seeing Eye Dogs Pup/Dog in Training policy based on safety, health and comfort of fellow employees.
- Mt Eliza PS reserves the right to revoke the permission for an employee to bring a Seeing Eye Dogs Pup/Dog in Training into the office.
  - Reasons that may justify a SED pup/dog to return home and/or be prevented from returning to the office are:
    - If the pup/dog repeatedly intimidates, frightens, threatens or attacks other people or pets.
    - If the pup/dog causes harm or injury to a person, other animal or business property.
    - Excessive barking, running and other activities that may disrupt work.

The prohibition to return can apply indefinitely or until the SED pup/dog is further trained, depending on the seriousness of the transgression.

## **Interaction with School Management**

There may be times when school management approaches a Carer regarding their SED pup/dog. Employees will respect the advice and request of the school management.

## **Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of MEPS two –year review cycle

School Council President: Dean Charge

Signature:

Date: 14/12/20