



Animals on School Grounds Policy

Rationale

At St Joseph's, the health, safety, and well-being of our students, staff, and visitors are our top priorities. To support a safe and inclusive environment for all, we have implemented the following policy regarding animals on school grounds.

General Policy – No Animals on School Grounds

For the safety and comfort of our school community, animals (including dogs) are not permitted on school grounds at any time, including drop-off and pick-up periods. This policy applies to all visitors, including parents and carers.

Reasons for This Policy

- **Safety:** Even the most well-behaved animals can act unpredictably in busy, unfamiliar environments. Children may unintentionally provoke an animal or approach it in a way that makes it uncomfortable, which could lead to bites or scratches.
- **Allergies:** Some students and staff may have allergic reactions to certain animals, including pet dander or fur, which can be serious and impact their ability to learn or work comfortably.
- **Fear & Anxiety:** Many children (and some adults) have a genuine fear of animals, especially dogs. Seeing or encountering animals unexpectedly on school grounds can cause significant stress or anxiety.
- **Hygiene:** Animals can contribute to hygiene concerns, particularly in areas where children play or eat.

Pre-Arranged Educational Visits

We do recognise the value animals can bring to children's learning. For this reason, animals **may be brought onto school grounds** under the following conditions:

- The visit must be **pre-arranged and approved** by the Principal or a designated staff member.

- The animal must be **docile, well-behaved, clean, and vaccinated** (where applicable).
- The purpose of the visit should be educational, e.g., part of **Class News**, Show and Tell, or a specific lesson.
- The animal must be under the **direct supervision** of an adult at all times and kept in a secure area.
- The visit must be communicated to all relevant staff to allow accommodations for students with allergies or phobias.

Service Animals

Registered service animals (e.g., guide dogs) are exempt from this policy and are welcome on school grounds in accordance with legal and accessibility guidelines.

RELATED POLICIES

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Student Welfare Policy

Review: This policy will be reviewed as part of our 4 year cycle.