



KINDER DOG POLICY

Best Practice – Quality Area 3

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines for engaging staff, students and families at **Sunnyside Kindergarten Association, Inc.** with Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs. It also provides direction to the Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dog policies - developed specifically by Vision Australia and adhered to by the kinder when we have a Seeing Eye Dog join the program.

This policy aims to clearly define:

- A Framework for the appropriate education and training of staff, parents and children on how to live safely with dogs.
- Procedures for dealing with Seeing Eye Dogs inside the kinder environment
- Appropriate supervision of all children, staff, parents at the service
- An environment that is safe, clean and hygienic
- Where to find specific policies developed by Vision Australia

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Sunnyside Kindergarten Association, Inc. is committed to:

- supporting all children to feel safe, happy and secure in the kinder setting
- ensuring that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected at all times while also promoting their learning and development.
- implementing and following effective hygiene practices
- fulfilling a duty of care to all children attending the service
- fulfilling the requirements of the Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dog training policies
- providing accountable and effective staffing and management practices
- facilitating appropriate communication and education for staff, parents and children relating to Seeing Eye Dogs.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, other staff, students on placement and volunteers at **Sunnyside Kindergarten Association, Inc.**

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

3. BACKGROUND

Having a pet at **Sunnyside Kindergarten** gives children the opportunity to observe, interact and learn about animals. It is a valuable part of a child's education and care experience, enriching their learning about nature, ecology and relationships.

Seeing Eye Dogs are Labrador x Retriever puppies bred specifically to work as Seeing Eye Dogs.

In the past, Seeing Eye Dogs have engaged with children in the 4-year old program and 3-year-old program. The Seeing Eye Dog may also attend incursions/excursions as part of their training.

There will be a sign at the front entrance when the Seeing Eye Dog is at the kindergarten: "Today a dog called [Name of Dog] is in the classroom."

Staff are required to actively supervise children at all times when the Seeing Eye Dog is in attendance at the service.

4. LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation includes but is not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Education and Care Services National Law 2010
- National Quality Standards
- Occupational Health and Safety Oct 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety regulations 2007
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- Standard 2.1: Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
- Element 2.1.2: Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the General Definitions section of this manual- available at the Kindergarten.

Appropriate supervision: Children should also be appropriately supervised when they have contact with animals to avoid potential injury or harm to the child or the animal.

Disease: Access to animals in an education and care service requires special consideration to prevent the spread of infectious diseases because contact with animals can spread disease. Health authorities identify that germs can be present on the skin, hair, feathers and scales, and in the faeces, urine and saliva of animals. While these germs may not cause disease in the animal, they may cause disease in humans.

Effective hand washing and cleaning: Children and adults should employ effective hand washing after touching or feeding animals. Cleaning of enclosures can be part of the learning experience.

Safe behaviour around dogs: The following rules are recommended by the Department of Environment and Primary industries 'Living Safely with Dogs' program and reinforced by the Victorian Government's Better Health Channel Website:

- Always supervise children and dogs
- If you are unable to supervise even for a short time, separate children from dogs.
- Always let the dog smell the back of your hand first.
- Pat dogs gently and calmly from the collar to the tail
- Do not pat a dog on its head.
- Never disturb a dog that is eating or sleeping

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

5. SOURCES

- Better Health Channel Website: Child Safety "Children & Animals"
- Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries 'Living Safely With Dogs' Education Program
- ACECQU - Quality Information Sheets: Keeping Pets And Animals In Education And Care Services
- RSPCA - Guidance for Pet Ownership
- Responsible Pet Program - VIC Government
- Vision Australia – Seeing Eye Dogs website

6. POLICIES

- Occupational Health & Safety Policy
- Incident, Illness, Trauma & Illness Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Hygiene Policy

PROCEDURES

THE APPROVED PROVIDER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Ensuring adequate care and training of the dog is continually provided by their owner, Kathleen Harley in order for them to attend the kindergarten.
- Ensuring proper procedures are in place to maintain the health and hygiene of the kinder is maintained with the dogs' present
- Encouraging educators to model appropriate behaviour and support children during interactions with the Seeing Eye Dog.
- Running a "Living Safely with Dogs" education session for each four-year-old kinder group, parents and staff. Particular attention in the session is given to recognising

the warning signs given by dogs, the correct way to approach a dog and what to do if approached by an aggressive dog.

- Supplying a First Aid Kit
- Encouraging parents, through this policy, to practise safe dog behaviours at home and to teach children on an ongoing basis how to behave around dogs to minimise risk of dog bites
- Following all procedures as set out in the Incident, Injury, Trauma & illness Policy (including notice of notifiable incidents, appropriate record keeping in the event of an incident, maintain first aid kit etc)

THE NOMINATED SUPERVISOR AND OTHER EDUCATORS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for the care, health, wellbeing and continuous training of the Seeing Eye Dog puppy in order for them to be a part of the kinder community - this includes a regular vet check to assess temperature, nails, fleas, ticks and ensure the dogs general health is good. This also includes regular worming and vaccination.
- The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for keeping the dog home if they are unwell.
- Ensuring procedures are in place to maintain the health and hygiene of the kinder while the children are eating. The dog is kept in the office during seated lunch and while the children are having morning/ afternoon tea.
- Teaching the staff and children about safety and hygiene issues and the general care and responsibility required for a pet - prior to the introduction of the Seeing Eye Dog for the kinder year.
- Continually educating children on the appropriate behaviours around dogs, including recognising warning signs, the correct way to approach a dog, and how to treat the Seeing Eye Dog.
- Ensuring the dog and children are never left unattended without an educator
- Ensuring procedures to check for dog poo prior to all kinder sessions are enacted each session. Dog Poo checks added to the general environmental safety checklist and is the responsibility of all educators
- Ensuring any medical incidents are reported in a log
- Ensuring children wash hands if they touch a dog and prior to eating

PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Practising safe dog behaviours at home and outside of the kinder
- Teaching children on an ongoing basis how to behave around dogs to minimise risk of dog bites, attending the 'Living Safely with Dogs' education session as provided by the committee for children, parents and staff
- Reading and being familiar with this policy
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee
- Following the directions of staff at the service at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.
- Volunteers and Students, while at the service are responsible for following this policy and procedures.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly check staff procedures to ensure Working with Children Clearances (WWC) and qualifications are current and complete
- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Sunnyside Kindergarten Association, Inc. on 4 July 2021

REVIEW DATE: 4 July 2023