

Animal-Assisted Program Template - School Risk Register

Instructions

The purpose of a school risk register is to **identify, document, and manage or control** risks when implementing an animal-assisted program at your school.

This register will help you:

- inform those involved (for example, an animal handler) of their roles and responsibilities for the animal-assisted program.
- Ensure the animal is appropriately cared for and where appropriate, trained.

The examples in this template are to help you consider what may be relevant to the circumstances of your animal-assisted program. **This template must be modified to reflect the processes and strategies undertaken at your school.**

Before completing this school risk register, you should:

1. Consult with school staff, students and the school community (including families, volunteers and school council) about any risks they have identified. You may be able to do this through existing channels, including school council, parent club, or student representative council or any third party service providers.
2. Consider risks in the physical school environment as well as to the health and safety of the school community.
3. Consider risks that might be specific to vulnerable cohorts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disability, and international education students.

When completing any school risk register, you should:

1. **Add** any risks - strategic, operational or project that **are relevant** to your school.
2. **Add** existing risk management strategies (controls) that your school is already undertaking.
3. **Choose** the risk assessment ratings that apply to the risk in your school (refer to [Risk Rating Matrix \(PDF 56kb\)](#)).
4. Where the risk rating is **low** and the existing risk management strategies (controls) are effective, you do **not** have to undertake new risk management strategies (treatments).

5. Where the risk rating is **medium or above**, **add** new risk management strategies (treatments) that your school will undertake
6. **Add** the name and position title of the person in your school who will be responsible for the new risk management strategies (treatments) and completion due date.
7. **Add** a date (and diarise) the next review of the risk register (it is recommended that Extreme and High risk are monitored, reviewed and reported on **quarterly**).
8. **The principal** should **sign** the risk register.

Refer to the Department's [Risk Management policy](#) on PAL for further guidance, or contact the DET Risk team at risk.in.education@edumail.vic.gov.au for help to complete this risk register.

Bourchier St Primary School

Risk Register for Animal-Assisted Program

School: Bourchier St Primary School

Location(s): Bourchier St, Shepparton, VIC

Responsible staff member: Gary D'Arma, Principal

Approved by school principal:



Date reviewed: 02/04/25

Next review due: March 2026

Risk Title & Description	Risk Causes & Consequences	Existing risk management strategies (controls)	Risk Assessment			New risk management strategies (treatments)	Who is responsible?	Completion date of new risk management strategies (treatments)
Define the risk including a title and a short description <i>What can go wrong?</i>	Describe the risk cause/s and consequence/s <i>What would cause it to go wrong? (causes)</i> <i>What are the impacts if it does go wrong? (consequences)</i>	Describe any existing policy, procedure, practice or device that acts to minimise the risk <i>What is in place now that reduces the likelihood of this risk occurring or its impact if it did occur?</i>	Risk Consequence <i>How big would the impact of this risk be if it occurred? (choose one)</i>	Risk Likelihood <i>How likely is this risk to occur? (choose one)</i>	Risk Rating <i>What is the current risk level based on the risk rating matrix</i>	Describe the actions to be undertaken for those risks requiring further treatments	List the name and position who is responsible for each new risk management strategy (noting that the principal is ultimately responsible)	The date each new risk management strategy (treatment) action should be completed by
Risk: Physical or psychological injury Student or staff may be bitten/scratched or otherwise injured by the animal	Causes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The animal is agitated or frightened because of a person's behaviour (for example, a student pulls the animal's ears, tail, or otherwise startles the animal that results in a display of aggression). Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive training by certified dog trainer/animal behaviourist or Department of Education and Training Mental Health Menu animal wellbeing program provider, with a specific emphasis on contact with children and large groups Documented research into breed/sex of animal. 	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal handlers training is continually updated. New handlers have an induction program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Term Two 2025

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The animal responds in a way that results in physical or psychological injury to a person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid kit available in classroom. Consider whether a second member of staff should be on standby for first few days/weeks the children interact with the animal to assist in monitoring how the animal/children adjust to the change. Protocol to remove animal if it becomes agitated in classroom (i.e. call office staff or 						

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		neighbouring classroom teacher to assist, instruct students to move into "x" area). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff member or person in control of handling the animal are aware of their responsibility and potential liability should an attack occur under their supervision. 						

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Risk: Allergy Students or staff may be allergic to animal, or the presence of the animal may trigger an asthma attack	Causes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal hair/dander Consequences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person experiences symptoms of allergy, caused by inflammation to the nasal passages, skin (also known as allergic dermatitis) or asthma. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure school has up to date medical information for all students and staff who may be in contact with animal. Obtain informed consent from parents/carers of students with documented allergies/asthma and consider protocol for situations where students may not be able to be placed in the 	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allergy management process followed. First Aid staff informed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jodie VanPopering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Term 1 2025

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		<p>class because of their allergies or medical conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documented research into type of animal and breed e.g. consider suitability of non-shedding or hypoallergenic animal 						
Risk: Fear of animal	Cause <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing mental health concerns. Experiences of trauma - person may have been 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify at risk students and identify protocols to protect/distance concerned persons from animal . 	Severe Major Moderate Minor	Almost certain Likely Possible	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication with families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Term 1 2025

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Staff or students may be fearful or anxious in the presence of animal	<p>exposed to dangerous animals or experienced injury by an animal in the past, or for some other reason developed a fear of animals.</p> <p>Consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person may experience symptoms or poor mental health including heightened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain informed consent, prepare protocols to protect/distance concerned persons from animal. Consult with animal trainer/behaviourist and where appropriate ensure animal understands commands e.g. to back away/drop/sit. We will “transition” the animal into the school / classroom setting (i.e. 	Insignificant	Unlikely Rare				

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	<p>anxiety trigger a 'fight/flight/freeze' physiological response. This may their ability to perform at school/work.</p>	<p>one day per week initially and increasing over time).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure animal is able to be removed from presence of person in the event of an incident. • Community consultation. 						
Risk:	<p>Causes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some cultures traditionally do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and staff consultation. This may include working with 	Severe Major	Almost certain	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure we have an awareness of cultural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term 1 2025

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Cultural safety Staff or students may feel uncomfortable in presence of a particular animal because of cultural background	not engage with certain animals according to their faith. For example, some people of Islamic faith may view dogs as forbidden. Consequences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students and their families may not feel comfortable with a school support animal at school. 	multicultural aids and prominent community members to understand their views and agree on how to provide a safe environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular communication to staff on animal-assisted programs policy and 'opt out' consent processes/invitation to raise concerns. Regular communication of 'opt 	Moderate Minor Insignificant	Likely Possible Unlikely Rare		traditions, values and beliefs		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who do not interact with the animal according to their faith may feel excluded or 'othered'. Staff may not feel culturally safe in their workplace. 	<p>out' consent process for animal-assisted program in school newsletters or letters home (including translated letters where required).</p>						
Students / staff approaching the dog	Dog pulls away	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students and staff will be educated on how to behave around the 	Severe Major Moderate	Almost certain Likely	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Term 2 2025

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	<p>Dog shows signs of anxiety, eg. puts tailbetween leg</p> <p>Dog acts aggressively</p> <p>Dog jumps up</p> <p>Dog is approached without permission</p>	<p>dog via a school produced PowerPoint presentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog to be approached only with verbal permission sought from the dog handler eg. Can I pat the dog? • Students and staff must approach from the front of the dog with the interacting person gently holding their hand out in front 	<p>Minor</p> <p>Insignificant</p>	<p>Possible</p> <p>Unlikely</p> <p>Rare</p>				

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		of them and lowering their body down to dog height (when physically possible). If dog raises hackles, growls or has tail between legs, do not proceed to pat. Follow dog handler's instructions. If dog appears relaxed and wags tail, proceed to calmly and slowly pat the dog.						

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog must be in direct supervision of the dog handler at all times. The dog can be restrained in a crate in the school's office if required. • Dog is not to be fed unless under direct supervision of dog handler. • Dog will be on leash when moving about the school. 						

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dog to be sitting or standing calmly when students first approach. 						
The dog gets loose from its designated space or from its leash	Child scratched, or bitten by dog Dog runs away	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dog's crate/basket will be kept in a Wellbeing Space and can be used to keep the School Dog safe. The dog will be permitted to roam free in 	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handlers supported with education and strategies for future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Term 1 2025

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		<p>some spaces. Staff will be alerted and students only allowed in, with supervision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and staff are taught not to tease or taunt the dog • If the dog does get loose, the Administration staff or designated handler will call for support from 						

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		<p>trained staff who will assist with retrieving and restraining the dog. Use the dog's name to encourage his return</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school dog will always be on his leash when moving around the school or when trained adults are in supervision. 						

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Dog toileting	Hygiene Stressed Dog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All solid bowel movements must be picked up in plastic bag by an adult, disposed of appropriately, and hand hygiene practices implemented. 	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Term 1 2025
Dog moving about the school	Dog is startled or spooked Dog jumps Dog refuses to go	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dog to remain on leash and wear a vest at all times 	Severe Major Moderate	Almost certain Likely	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Term 1 2025

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	where intended	<p>when moving about the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog to be led not dragged. If reluctant to move, dog handler will need to investigate reason. Stop, settle the dog with gentle reassurances and pats, and then move on. 	<p>Minor Insignificant</p>	<p>Possible Unlikely Rare</p>				

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Define the risk including a title and a short description <i>What can go wrong?</i>	Describe the risk cause/s and consequence/s <i>What would cause it to go wrong? (causes)</i> <i>What are the impacts if it does go wrong? (consequences)</i>	Describe any existing policy, procedure, practice or device that acts to minimise the risk <i>What is in place now that reduces the likelihood of this risk occurring or its impact if it did occur?</i>	Risk Consequence <i>How big would the impact of this risk be if it occurred? (choose one)</i>	Risk Likelihood <i>How likely is this risk to occur? (choose one)</i>	Risk Rating <i>What is the current risk level based on the risk rating matrix</i>	Describe the actions to be undertaken for those risks requiring further treatments	List the name and position who is responsible for each new risk management strategy (noting that the principal is ultimately responsible)	The date each new risk management strategy (treatment) action should be completed by
Student/Staff interacting with the dog (Play)	Dog gets excited during interactive play like fetch or receiving a treat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No tug-of-war games to be played at any time. Initially, access to balls and ropes for games with students and dogs are restricted. In strictly supervised situations only, some games of fetch may be played in a safe space, under full supervision of the dog handler. 	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Term 1 2025

Risk Title & Description	Risk Causes & Consequences	Existing risk management strategies (controls)	Risk Assessment			New risk management strategies (treatments)	Who is responsible?	Completion date of new risk management strategies (treatments)
Define the risk including a title and a short description <i>What can go wrong?</i>	Describe the risk cause/s and consequence/s <i>What would cause it to go wrong? (causes)</i> <i>What are the impacts if it does go wrong? (consequences)</i>	Describe any existing policy, procedure, practice or device that acts to minimise the risk <i>What is in place now that reduces the likelihood of this risk occurring or its impact if it did occur?</i>	Risk Consequence <i>How big would the impact of this risk be if it occurred? (choose one)</i>	Risk Likelihood <i>How likely is this risk to occur? (choose one)</i>	Risk Rating <i>What is the current risk level based on the risk rating matrix</i>	Describe the actions to be undertaken for those risks requiring further treatments	List the name and position who is responsible for each new risk management strategy (noting that the principal is ultimately responsible)	The date each new risk management strategy (treatment) action should be completed by
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and students to follow instructions of dog handler during play at all times. 						
Children getting germs from the dog	Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should the dog defecate on the school site, a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in an 	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Term 1 2025

Risk Title & Description	Risk Causes & Consequences	Existing risk management strategies (controls)	Risk Assessment			New risk management strategies (treatments)	Who is responsible?	Completion date of new risk management strategies (treatments)
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		<p>appropriate and safe manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All immunisations are the responsibility of the Owner who will keep accurate records and make vet appointments when vaccinations are due, in consultation with the Principal. Flea and worming treatments 						

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		<p>will be carried out at appropriate intervals as recommended by the vet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog will be washed frequently. • The dog will not be permitted into any food preparation area. 						