

# Therapy Dog Program Template - School Risk Register

## Instructions

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

This register will help you:

- inform those involved (for example, the therapy dog handler) of their roles and responsibilities for the therapy dog program.
- Ensure the dog is appropriately trained and cared for.

### 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

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](mailto:risk.in.education@edumail.vic.gov.au) for help to complete this risk register.

# Bourchier Street Primary school

## Risk Register for Therapy Dog

**School: Bourchier Street Primary School**

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**Location(s): Bourchier Street Shepparton**

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**Responsible staff member: Gary D'arma (Acting Principal)**

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**Approved by school principal: Gary D'Arma (Acting Principal)**

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**Date reviewed: 22/02/2023**

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**Next review due: February 2024**

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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>	<b>Risk Consequence</b> <i>How big would the impact of this risk be if it occurred? (choose one)</i>	<b>Risk Likelihood</b> <i>How likely is this risk to occur? (choose one)</i>	<b>Risk Rating</b> <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
<b>Risk:</b>  <b>Physical or psychological injury</b>  Student or staff may be bitten/scratched or otherwise injured by the dog	<b>Causes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dog is agitated or frightened because of a person's behaviour (for example, a student pulls the dog's ears, tail, or otherwise startles the dog that results in a display of aggression).</li> </ul> <b>Consequences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dog responds in a way that</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive training by Mental Health Menu animal wellbeing program provider, Dogs Connect with a specific emphasis on contact with children and large groups</li> <li>Dog breed was suggested by Dogs Connect for its temperament with children</li> <li>First aid kit available in classroom</li> </ul>	Severe <b>Major</b> Moderate Minor Insignificant	Almost certain Likely <b>Possible</b> Unlikely Rare	<b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dog handlers training is continually updated</li> <li>New dog handlers have an induction program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal</li> <li>Principal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Term One 2023</li> <li>Term One 2023</li> </ul>

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	results in physical or psychological injury to a person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocol to remove dog if he/she becomes agitated in classroom (i.e. call office staff or neighbouring classroom teacher to assist, instruct students to move into "x" area)</li> <li>• Staff member or person in control of handling the dog are aware of their responsibility and potential liability should an attack occur under their supervision</li> </ul>						

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<b>Risk:</b> <b>Allergy</b>  Students or staff may be allergic to dog, or the presence of the dog may trigger an asthma attack	<b>Causes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dog hair/dander</li> </ul> <b>Consequences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Person experiences symptoms of allergy, caused by inflammation to the nasal passages, skin (also known as allergic dermatitis) or asthma.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school has up to date medical information for all students and staff who may be in contact with dog</li> <li>Obtained informed consent from parents of students with documented allergies/asthma and considered protocols for situations where students may not be able to be placed in the class because of their</li> </ul>	Severe Major <b>Moderate</b> Minor Insignificant	Almost certain Likely <b>Possible</b> Unlikely Rare	<b>Medium</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>

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		allergies or medical conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The breed of dog, is a non-shedding or hypoallergenic dog breed (Groodle)</li> </ul>						
<b>Risk:</b> <b>Fear of dogs</b>  Staff or students may be fearful or anxious in the presence of dogs	<b>Cause</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing mental health concerns</li> <li>Experiences of trauma - person may have been exposed to dangerous dogs or experienced injury by a dog in the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of at risk students and protocols to protect/distance concerned persons from dog</li> <li>Obtain informed consent, prepare protocols to protect/distance</li> </ul>	Severe Major Moderate <b>Minor</b> Insignificant	Almost certain Likely <b>Possible</b> Unlikely Rare	<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>

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	<p>past, or for some other reason developed a fear of dogs or other animals.</p> <p><b>Consequences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Person may experience symptoms or poor mental health including heightened anxiety trigger a 'fight/flight/freeze'</li> </ul>	<p>concerned persons from dog</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with dog trainer/behaviourist to ensure dog understands commands to back away/drop/sit</li> <li>We will "transition" the dog into the school / classroom setting (i.e. one day per week initially and increasing over time)</li> <li>The dog is able to be removed from presence of person in</li> </ul>						



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	physiological response. This may affect their ability to perform at school/work.	the event of an incident as it will always be with a dog handler <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community consultation</li> </ul>						
<b>Risk:</b>  <b>Cultural safety</b>  Staff or students may feel uncomfortable in	<b>Causes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some cultures traditionally do not engage with dogs according to their faith. For example, some people of Islamic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community and staff consultation. This may include working with multicultural aids and prominent community members to understand their views and agree on how to</li> </ul>	Severe Major Moderate <b>Minor</b> Insignificant	Almost certain Likely <b>Possible</b> Unlikely	<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure we have an awareness of cultural traditions, values and beliefs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistant Principal (Curriculum)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Term 4 2022</li> </ul>

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presence of a dog because of cultural background	faith may view dogs as forbidden.  <b>Consequences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students and their families may not feel comfortable with the therapy dog at school</li> <li>Students who do not interact with the therapy dog according to their faith may feel excluded or 'othered'</li> </ul>	provide a safe environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular communication to staff on Therapy Dog Policy and 'opt out' consent processes/invitation to raise concerns</li> <li>Regular communication of 'opt out' consent process for therapy dog program in school newsletters or letters home (including translated letters where required)</li> </ul>		Rare				

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff may not feel culturally safe in their workplaces</li> </ul>							
Students / staff approaching the dog	<p>Dog pulls away</p> <p>Dog shows signs of anxiety, eg. puts tail between leg</p> <p>Dog acts aggressively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students and staff will be educated on how to behave around the dog via a school produced PowerPoint presentation.</li> <li>Dog to be approached only with verbal permission sought from the dog handler eg. Can I pat the dog?</li> </ul>	<p>Severe</p> <p>Major</p> <p>Moderate</p> <p>Minor</p> <p>Insignificant</p>	<p>Almost certain</p> <p>Likely</p> <p>Possible</p> <p>Unlikely</p> <p>Rare</p>	Medium	•	•	•

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	<p>Dog jumps up</p> <p>Dog is approached without permission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students and staff must approach from the front of the dog with the interacting person gently holding their hand out in front 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</li> </ul>						

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		<p>instructions. If dog appears relaxed and wags tail, proceed to calmly and slowly pat the dog.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Dog is not to be fed unless under direct supervision of dog</li> </ul>						

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		<p>handler.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog will be on leash when moving about the school.</li> <li>• Dog to be sitting or standing calmly when students first approach.</li> </ul>						
The dog gets loose from its designated space or from its leash	<p>Child scratched, or bitten by dog</p> <p>Dog runs away</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dog's crate/basket will be kept in a Wellbeing Space and can be used to keep the School Dog safe.</li> </ul>	<p>Severe</p> <p>Major</p> <p>Moderate</p> <p>Minor</p> <p>Insignificant</p>	<p>Almost certain</p> <p>Likely</p> <p>Possible</p> <p>Unlikely</p> <p>Rare</p>	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dog will be permitted to roam free in some spaces. Staff will be alerted and students only allowed in, with supervision.</li> <li>Students and staff are taught not to tease or taunt the dog</li> <li>If the dog does get loose, the</li> </ul>						

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		<p>Administration staff or designated handler will call for support from 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"> <li>The school dog will always be on his leash when moving around the school or when trained adults are in</li> <li>supervision.</li> </ul>						



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

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>		Rare				
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"> <li>• No tug-of-war games to be played at any time. Initially, access to balls and ropes for games with students and dogs are</li> </ul>	Severe Major Moderate <b>Minor</b> Insignificant	Almost certain Likely <b>Possible</b> Unlikely	<b>Medium</b>	•	•	•

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		<p>restricted. In strictly supervised situations only, some games of fetch may be played in a safe space, under full supervision of the dog handler.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff and students to follow instructions of dog handler during play at all times.</li> </ul>		Rare				

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Children getting germs from the dog	Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should the dog defecate on the school site, a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in an appropriate and safe manner.</li> <li>All immunisations are the responsibility of the Owner who will keep accurate records and make vet</li> </ul>	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare	Medium	•	•	•

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		appointments when vaccinations are due, in consultation with the Principal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flea and worming treatments will be carried out at appropriate intervals as recommended by the vet.</li> <li>The dog will be washed frequently.</li> </ul>						

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dog will not be permitted into any food preparation area.</li> </ul>						