

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

# PAKENHAM SECONDARY COLLEGE

## Risk Register for Therapy Dog

**School:** Pakenham Secondary College

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**Location(s):** 1020 Princes Highway, Pakenham 3810

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**Responsible staff member:** Mr Aaron Smith (Principal)

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**Approved by school principal:**

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**Date reviewed:**

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**Next review due:** [insert review date, no longer than 1 year from date reviewed]

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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>	<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 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</li> </ul>	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare	Extreme High Medium Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[name and position]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Date/Month/Year</li> </ul>

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	results in physical or psychological injury to a person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented research into breed/sex of dog</li> <li>• First aid kit available in classroom</li> <li>• Consider whether a second member of staff should be on standby for first few days/weeks dog is in the classroom to assist in monitoring how the dog/children adjust to the change</li> </ul>						

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		<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</li> </ul>						

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		occur under their supervision						
<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</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure school has up to date medical information for all students and staff who may be in contact with dog</li> <li>Obtain informed consent from parents of students with documented allergies/asthma and consider protocol for</li> </ul>	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare	<b>Extreme</b> <b>High</b> <b>Medium</b> <b>Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[name and position]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Date/Month/Year</li> </ul>

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	(also known as allergic dermatitis) or asthma.	situations where students may not be able to be placed in the class because of their allergies or medical conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documented research into breed of dog, i.e. consider suitability of non-shedding or hypoallergenic dog breeds</li> </ul>						
<b>Risk:</b> <b>Fear of dogs</b>	<b>Cause</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing mental health concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify at risk students and identify protocols to</li> </ul>	Severe Major	Almost certain	<b>Extreme</b> <b>High</b>	•	• [name and position]	• Date/Month/Year



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Staff or students may be fearful or anxious in the presence of dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences of trauma - person may have been exposed to dangerous dogs or experienced injury by a dog in the past, or for some other reason developed a fear of dogs or other animals.</li> </ul> <p><b>Consequences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Person may experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>protect/distance concerned persons from dog</li> <li>Obtain informed consent, prepare protocols to protect/distance concerned persons from dog</li> <li>Consult with dog trainer/behaviourist to ensure dog understands commands to back away/drop/sit</li> <li>Consider strategies to "transition" the</li> </ul>	Moderate Minor Insignificant	Likely Possible Unlikely Rare	Medium Low			

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	symptoms or poor mental health including heightened anxiety trigger a 'fight/flight/freeze' physiological response. This may affect their ability to perform at school/work.	dog into the school / classroom setting (i.e. one day per week initially and increasing over time) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider "trial period"</li> <li>• Ensure dog is able to be removed from presence of person in the event of an incident</li> <li>• Community consultation</li> </ul>						

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<b>Risk:</b>  <b>Cultural safety</b>  Staff or students may feel uncomfortable in presence of a dog because of cultural background	<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 faith may view dogs as forbidden.</li> </ul> <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> </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 provide a safe environment</li> <li>Regular communication to staff on Therapy Dog Policy and 'opt out' consent</li> </ul>	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare	Extreme High Medium Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[name and position]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Date/Month/Year</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students who do not interact with the therapy dog according to their faith may feel excluded or 'othered'</li> <li>Staff may not feel culturally safe in their workplaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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>						