

Infant Jesus School - Wellness Dog FAQ



1. What is the purpose of having a Wellness Dog at school?

The purpose of introducing a Wellness Dog at Infant Jesus School is to reduce the number of children who may be experiencing anxiety and stress at school. Studies have shown that the mere presence of a dog can lower stress and anxiety levels and promote relaxation and cardiovascular health by decreasing blood pressure.

2. What sort of dog is it?

The Wellness Dog is a Labradoodle puppy who will be approximately 10 weeks old when it starts at Infant Jesus School at the beginning of 2024.

3. What if my child is allergic to dogs?

The dog is hypoallergenic as it is primarily crossed between a Labrador and the toy/minature Poodle designed for people who are allergic to pet hair. Children will not need to touch the dog or be in a classroom with a dog which will relieve the possibility of any allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs.

4. Is the dog trained?

The Wellness puppy will have on going 'on the job training' and offsite group/individual advanced training through reputable trainers. Training will be ongoing.

5. Who owns the dog?

Infant Jesus School owns the dog.

6. Where does the dog live?

The Wellness Dog lives with Ms Mel Allen.

7. How often will the dog be coming into school?

The dog will be coming into school every day during school terms, unless it is unwell or requires rest time.

8. Where will the dog be situated during the day whilst here at school?

The Wellness Dog will be based in the school office but will be around the school visiting various classes during the day to see the children if and when needed.

9. What if my child doesn't like dogs or has a fear of dogs?

If your child has a fear of dogs or doesn't like them, please fill in the attached form and express your concerns. No child will be forced to interact with the dog if they are frightened, scared or don't like dogs.

10. Can I bring my own dog into school now that you have a Wellness Dog at school?

No other dogs will be permitted onto the school grounds at any time. The Wellness Dog is a working dog who will be training to fill the emotional needs of the children at Infant Jesus School.

11. What if there is an unlikely event or incident with the dog?

In the unlikely event of an incident with the Wellness Dog, the child's parents will be contacted immediately, and the child will be attended to by a first aid qualified educator.

12. Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog.

13. How will my child know what to do if they haven't been around dogs before?

The educators will educate the children on how to interact with the dog and reinforce this at each visit.

14. Can I feed the Wellness Dog?

No food or drink is to be given to the Wellness Dog without the handler's permission.

15. Cleanliness of the children and Wellness Dog

Strict hand washing procedures will be implemented before and after patting the dog. Educators will role model and encourage children to wash their hands. The handler will ensure the dog is regularly bathed and is up to date with all vaccinations. In the interests of health and hygiene, our Wellness Dog will be toileted in designated area's with procedures in place for unforeseen accidents.

16. How will the dog's welfare be considered?

Our Wellness dog will be carefully monitored. She will be walked regularly and given free time outside of sessions to rest and play. The dog will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have appropriate access to food and water.

17. How can I as a parent help with preparing my child for the arrival of the Wellness Dog at Infant Jesus School?

You can help your child by having discussions with them about the dog and communicating any questions or fears they may have that we can address. We are happy to work with individual children and families to support them in feeling comfortable and safe.