



Fun Reading 🐾 Reading for Life

Risk Minimisation Strategies

Story Dogs is very aware of the potential risks to children who participate in our program. As such we have gone to extensive lengths to minimise these risks. In the event that an injury does happen we have current Public Liability Insurance cover for \$20 million dollars. The following is a summary of the risk minimisation strategies we have embedded into our recruiting, training and placement procedures for our volunteer dog teams:

- No restricted dog breeds are used
- A person must have owned or be closely associated with the dog for at least 12 months
- The dog must be older than 12 months
- Dog teams must pass a 10 point Dog Team Accreditation Test
- We use only experienced dog trainers, who are external to Story Dogs, to accredit the Dog Teams
- Multiple dog accreditors assess dogs if necessary
- Volunteers are trained to look for the signs of their dog becoming stressed, a possible precursor for a dog bite
- It is Story Dogs Policy that volunteers are not in the playground during break times. Volunteers are directed to enter and exit the school in times when children are in class and not in the playground where the dog can become stressed due to large amounts of noise and attention
- Volunteers never leave their dog unattended
- The dog is on a lead at all times
- Volunteers use a Weekly Dog Interaction Review Sheet. This is a monitoring tool to determine whether the dog is getting stressed.
- Volunteers are trained in the Story Dogs Emergency Procedure if any incident happens. Staff are also informed of the Story Dogs Emergency Procedure.
- Parental consent is required before a child can participate in the program. It is assumed that a child who is strongly afraid of dogs or who has behaviours which may be detrimental to dogs is not given permission.
- The location of the reading sessions within the venue are chosen so as to ensure volunteers are not alone and out of sight with the child. Reading sessions are to be in sight of staff at all times.
- Story Dogs advocates for the students to be guided in how to interact with our dogs and reminds all that it is, 'Pats not Hugs' that our dogs want.
- Story Dogs does not recommend dogs undertake more than 2 x 2 hour work on non-consecutive days per week. This would include therapy and other visiting duties the dog undertakes.

