

Wantirna South Primary School

Proudly Presents

PAWS UP FOR LEARNING



SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WHOLE CHILD

ONE PAW AT A TIME!

Wantirna South Primary school is proud to present a new and innovative program that takes learning to a whole new level. 'PAWS up for learning' focuses on developing the 'whole child', therefore the benefits spread out into all areas of the child's life. The program encourages students to be engaged in their learning and helps them achieve socially, emotionally, physical and academically.



The PAWS program features one very special component, a very affectionate and friendly puppy called 'Scruffy'. Scruffy's breed took some careful consideration and a lot of research. Firstly, he needed to have a loving, friendly and kind nature who would be happy to work with a large number of children. Secondly, he needed to have the intelligence to

be able to learn very quickly how to act and behave within the school environment. Thirdly, he needed to have a hyper allergenic coat for those students in the school who have allergies. The result, a labradoodle!

Labradoodles are a cross between a poodle and Labrador. Scruffy was sourced from a breeder who bred third generation labradoodle puppies, meaning he has a non-shedding and allergy friendly coat. It is known for a fact that he is allergy friendly as he spends the majority of his time in a classroom with a child who is allergic to other dogs. Scruffy's breeding has allowed him to quickly become a very big part of Wantirna South Primary School. He transitioned into the school at the tender age of 10 weeks old, where he melted the hearts of anyone he met.



PAWS WELLBEING

Dogs are remarkable at lowering stress and anxiety levels and in doing so often defuse imminent explosions of frustration or negative behaviours. Scruffy is a miraculous dog, as he does things that shouldn't be expected of such a young puppy.

A student with diabetes was having a hyper and was inconsolable. Scruffy at 13 weeks old entered the room and sat next to the student. What happened next was amazing! Scruffy looked concerned with the students emotional state, he crept forward so he could rest his head onto the students lap and lick his arm. Soon after the student began to pat Scruffy and his troubles began to disappear. Within 10 minutes the student had stopped crying, began to talk and was gaining control of his emotions. After a walk around the School with Scruffy the student happily joined his class like nothing had ever happened.

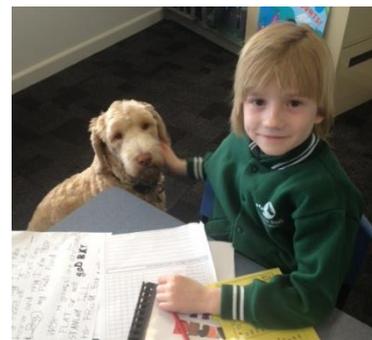
It was an exciting step forward for the PAWS program as an integral part of the wellbeing program at the school.

IN THE CLASSROOM



Students are able to sit and read with Scruffy and be in a non-judgemental environment. The students are encouraged and excited about the opportunity of reading to him. This opportunity aims to develop children's confidence in reading out loud and taking risks with their learning.

Scruffy has spent majority of his time in Prep but is beginning to become a more regular part of the learning in other grades. He enjoys wondering around the classroom and sitting beside a child working always looking for a pat. Time with Scruffy is a special part of the day for some children which help motivate them to complete their work to ensure they get the chance to have a cuddle with him.



WHATS IN STORE FOR THE FUTURE

Scruffy recently completed a 5 day intensive 'Animal Assisted Therapy' course. This course allowed Scruffy to develop skills to interact with patients and elderly people in a calm and controlled manner. I hope to extend the 'PAWS program' into the Knox community by visiting hospitals and nursing homes. A small group of students will accompany Scruffy into the community to hopefully improve the wellbeing of those who need it most.

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