

1. Purpose

This policy outlines expectations and responsibilities for having *Mochii*, a friendly pet dog belonging to Cathy Harrison, on site at times during working hours. The goal is to prioritise safety, wellbeing, inclusion, and informed consent, ensuring Mochii's presence contributes positively to the environment while accommodating individual needs.

This policy aligns with the [Dogs Connect program](#) and integrates principles of best practice, and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), including participant safety, informed choice and control, and inclusive risk planning.

2. Scope

Applies to all Rookery Road staff, students, families, and visitors during times Mochii is present. It applies to both individual and group settings.

3. About Mochii

Mochii is a small, slightly anxious, and well-mannered dog who lives with Cathy Harrison, the Director of Rookery Road. Mochii will attend the clinic in Spotswood at times, either staying in a room with a member of staff, joining a low-stimulation session, or resting in her designated quiet space. Her presence is intentionally planned, staged, and regularly reviewed **to ensure appropriateness for each session and participant.**

Mochii is introduced as an individual with her own needs and responses. Her presence is intentionally planned, staged, and regularly reviewed.

4. General Guidelines

a. When Mochii is on Site

- Families and participants are aware that Mochii may be present (via front door signage, booking details, newsletters, and/or direct communication from educators).
- She remains in low-traffic or staff-only areas unless specifically invited.
- Mochii is never left unsupervised with students.
- Staff and participants can opt out of interacting with Mochii, and visa versa.
- Students may request interaction with Mochii but that will be managed directly by staff and Cathy Harrison.
- During the transition between session times, Mochii is in her designated safe space, or room with a staff member, with the door closed to prevent her entering the busy front area.
- Mochii is only present onsite when Cathy Harrison is also.
- Mochii is not permitted in the front reception area during drop-off and pick-up times unless on lead and directly supervised.

b. Health and Care

- Vet clearance is obtained annually to ensure Mochii is fit for a workplace environment.
- Regular grooming and health checks.
- Water, bedding, and toileting plan in place.
- Removed immediately from shared areas if unsettled, unwell, or overstimulated.

c. Behaviour

- Friendly and not prone to excessive barking or jumping.
 - Behaviour continuously observed.
 - Mochii will not be used as a behavioural management tool or incentive/reward for students.
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5. Interactions with Students, Participants, and Visitors

a. Consent and Boundaries

- There is no expectation for participants to engage with Mochii, nor expectation for Mochii to initiate interaction.
- Staff fully respect the wishes of parents/guardians who prefer their child/ren not interact with Mochii, and will inform their educator directly to support future planning.
- Alternative arrangements will be made available for individuals with allergies, fears, or cultural or religious considerations.
- Opt-out preferences will be clearly communicated, documented, and always respected.

b. Education and Respect

- Staff are educated on safe and respectful behaviour around Mochii during the onboarding and orientation process to Rookery Road..
 - Students are educated on safe and respectful behaviour around Mochii via poster/s at Rookery Road, in newsletters, and through educator modelling and video content to reinforce expectations.
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6. Staged Introduction and Risk Management

a. Structured Introduction

- Staff will communicate with families about Mochii before they begin at Rookery Road, allowing for families to ask questions and voice their preferences.
- Mochii is gradually introduced to new staff onsite from orientation through to day to day, ongoing interactions.

b. Risk Planning and Incident Management

- Our risk assessment is reviewed annually with the support of the [Dogs Connect program](#).
 - The following considerations are included in all risk documentation. These sections emphasise:
 - Respect for participant preferences and sensitivities
 - Person-centred planning and informed consent
 - Duty of care and dignity of risk
 - Any incident will be documented by staff in a [Mochii Incident Report](#), and shared directly with Cathy Harrison and involved parties. This will be followed by a discussion regarding the agreed next steps.
 - Insurance and liability reviewed annually.
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7. Roles and Responsibilities

- Cathy Harrison is solely responsible for Mochii's care, presence, transport, and supervision.
 - No staff member is required or requested to handle or supervise Mochii unless trained, confident, and willing.
 - Mochii is only brought to work when conditions are low-risk and predictable. This will adapt depending on timetabling at Rookery Road.
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8. Communication

- Participants and families are informed about Mochii through multiple channels, including social media, newsletter, T&Cs, and via their educators.
 - Printed information onsite and conversations with staff are available to aid understanding.
 - Communication regarding Mochii is on the booking pages to ensure new clients are aware, and includes an opt out option.
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9. Review and Feedback

- This policy is reviewed annually or in response to incidents or feedback.
 - Families, staff, and participants are encouraged to provide input.
 - Feedback mechanisms include email, surveys, and incident debriefs.
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Approved by:

Cathy Harrison & Kate Bertoncello

Rookery Road

June 2025