



SCHOOL-BASED WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT DOG

We are pleased to inform you that Box Hill North Primary School and Kindergarten has a Wellbeing and Engagement Dog whose role is to support the social and emotional needs of our students.



Sully is a five-year-old Australian Shepherd, who has completed significant training since he was very young - specifically training to ensure he is well socialised, calm and confident when interacting with people and other animals in a variety of settings. Sully works with a variety of qualified dog trainers regularly, including K9 Connect, Alfoxton Dog Centre and Urban Dogs HQ.

Sully has also been a Wellbeing and Engagement Dog at Anna's previous school for three years. Having had time off from his job in 2024 whilst Anna got settled into Box Hill North, he has had a couple of trial days at Box Hill North, and is very happy to be back to work, eager to engage with all members of the Box Hill North community.

Sully is at school a maximum of two days per week, as he needs rest days throughout the week. He will interact with all classes throughout his time at school but is primarily available for 1:1 wellbeing support for individual students as needed. Sully will work with Anna Johnstone (Principal) as his handler whilst at school.

Tips for interacting with Sully

- Wait for him to come to you – he's a busy guy and might not come up to you straight away.
- Stay quiet and still when he is around you, so he feels safe.
- Hold out your hand for him to sniff – smell is how he will get to know you.
- Ask Anna if you can pat him, then ask him whether he wants some pats. His favourite spot for a pat is under his chin.
- Look at the floor instead of his eyes – eye contact can be quite intimidating for a dog.
- Don't feed him unless Anna gives you treats to give him. He might try to tell you that he's starving, but he gets fed plenty at home!



BOX HILL NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN

There are several types of benefits from working with a wellbeing and engagement dog including:

- reduced stress and anxiety, including decreased learner anxiety behaviours
- improved physical and emotional wellbeing
- improved self-esteem, empathy and interpersonal skills
- improved relationship building and ability to pick up on social cues
- improved attendance (for disengaged students or students at risk of disengaging).

Our school follows the Department's requirements as outlined in the Animals - Wellbeing and Engagement Policy on the Policy and Advisory Library website.

If a student doesn't want to be around Sully at any given time, they are welcome to let Anna or their teacher know to keep Sully away from them. Anna and Sully understand that not everyone loves dogs and will provide adequate space so that everyone feels safe.

Please return the permission slip below if you would like your child to opt out of this program. If we do not receive your acknowledgement, it will be recorded that you are happy for your child to interact with our wellbeing and engagement dog, Sully.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AJ', written over a horizontal line.

Anna Johnstone

Principal

Box Hill North Primary School and Kindergarten – Wellbeing and Engagement Dog Program

As parent/carer of _____ from class _____, I would prefer to opt them out of the Wellbeing and Engagement Dog Program at school.

Signed _____ Date _____