

What is the 'Living Safely With Pets' Primary School Program?

The Living Safely with Pets program is delivered to primary schools throughout NSW and targets students in Grades K to 2. The program educates children on what it means to be a responsible pet owner and how to live safely with dogs.

Pet educators and their suitability-tested dogs visit schools to present the program. Presentations are delivered using multimedia tools, role play, song and story-telling. Schools are given complimentary educational resources and teaching tool packages.

Children can also engage with the program at home by visiting the interactive Victor and Victoria's Pet Town online or by downloading a free tablet app. The program makes over 900 visits to nearly 100,000 students annually throughout metropolitan Sydney and country NSW.

Why do I need to know about pet safety?

Australia has one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world. Most dog attacks involve children in the 0-8 age range and a high number of these attacks also occur in the home environment where children are bitten by their own dog or one known to them.

Educating children and their families ensures the child-pet relationship is not only physically and emotionally rewarding, but also safe.

What do children and parents learn in this program?

The Program teaches students about how to stay safe around dogs and what it means to be a responsible pet owner in the home and wider community including:

- when dogs should be left alone
- things we should not do to dogs
- how can you tell if a dog is happy, frightened or angry
- a safe way to approach and greet a dog
- what to do if approached by an unknown or aggressive dog

The Program also introduces and develops the following concepts:

- choosing an appropriate pet, animal welfare and husbandry
- the importance of identification and registration
- confinement and housing, exercise and training

There are a range of presentations designed to target the specific audiences suited to grade level, prior knowledge and learning modes.

Parents are given take home brochures and encouraged to apply lessons learned from the program.

Who teaches this education program?

The Program is delivered by trained educators accompanied by their suitability-tested dogs. Pet educators complete extensive mentoring and professional training and deliver a high quality presentation to children.

Suitability-tested dogs are assessed to ensure they are comfortable in the school environment. The dogs are trained to work under very strict guidelines, ensuring the safety of the children and dogs.

What is Pet Town?

Victor and Victoria's Pet Town is an animated interactive tool for children based on the program's safety messages. A tablet version has also been developed and is available free in App stores.

Children can play games in Pet Town and with Victor the dog and Victoria the cat, collecting rewards along the way. Visit: www.pettown.nsw.gov.au

How much does this education program cost?

Schools can access the program free of charge.