

Position Description

Position title	Paw Pals Program: Education Support Facilitator
Program/Unit	MacKillop Education Services, Tyabb
Classification	VCEMEA Education Support
Position reports to	Paw Pals (Animal Assisted Education) Coordinator

Organisational context

Established in 1997, MacKillop Family Services (MacKillop) strives to ensure all families are supported to provide children with a safe and permanent home, and the best possible start to their lives.

Continuing the child and family welfare programs of our three founding agencies – the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of St Joseph and the Christian Brothers – we provide early intervention programs to support the most vulnerable families, and provide education, disability support, home-based care and out of home care for vulnerable children and young people in Victoria, NSW and WA.

MacKillop has almost 1,500 staff, operating out of more than 50 sites, and has forecast annual revenue for the 2019/20 financial year of over \$145 million.

Just like our founders, we are deeply committed to our work, and are driven by social justice. We believe every child should be protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation, and are a child-safe organisation that is committed to protecting and advocating for the best interests of children and families across all our programs.

Our work is underpinned by our values, and by a deep understanding of the impact of trauma, informed by the Sanctuary Model. Sanctuary is a blueprint for organisational change, which supports organisations to provide a safe, non-violent environment for people affected by trauma. It also supports staff and carers to form communities that are safe and caring, and to maintain a culture that reflects these qualities at every level within the organisation. MacKillop is the only licensed provider of training in the Sanctuary Model in Australia.

Our vision

All children, young people and families are safe, thriving and connected to culture and community. MacKillop Family Services will care compassionately, respond large-heartedly and advocate courageously.

Our values

Justice: We believe in the right of all people, regardless of belief or culture, to be treated justly and fairly;

Hope: We commit to creating an atmosphere of hope where people find meaning in their experiences and relationship;

Collaboration: We commit to working in a collaborative spirit through cooperation, coordination, and partnership;

Compassion: We commit to creating an attitude of openness to others and to their circumstances; and

Respect: We seek to listen and learn from each other and to build relationships with respect.

Position purpose

The central goal of MacKillop Family Services is *to support, to foster hope and to promote justice for children, young people and their families, particularly those who experience distress, disadvantage and abuse*. Education is central to that goal.

Children in Out-of-Home Care are a high priority client group of MacKillop Education, as are adolescents at risk of leaving school without vocational skills. MacKillop Education currently provides education support to these young people through outreach programs from four sites: Geelong, Maidstone, Warrnambool and Caulfield. We also offer education support through our Children in Residential Care Programs (CIRC) and the Western Education Support Team Program (WEST).

Our schools in Geelong (Foundation to VCAL), Maidstone (Years 3 to 6), and Caulfield (Foundation to Year 10, commencing with Years 3 to 6 in 2020) cater for students who are disengaged, or at risk of disengaging, from education. The education programs provide flexible learning pathways and they equip participants with the skills they need to re-enter mainstream school, or, for senior students, to take up employment or further education options, including traineeships and apprenticeships.

The XTend Program in Geelong caters for young people aged 12 to 17 years, who are engaged with mental health services and/or child protection.

Our Outreach Paw Pals Program focuses on building student engagement and confidence and enhancing learning outcomes. This will be facilitated through Animal Assisted Educational (AAE) based activities and individualised learning sessions, working alongside trained therapy dogs and program facilitators. AAE is a planned and structured student intervention with specific academic and educational goals.

Primary Objectives

- To improve learning outcomes for children and young people in Out-of-Home Care and primary and secondary school settings, using a specialised Animal Assisted Education Curriculum
- To foster a collaborative approach with educational and community services stakeholders
- To ensure the Paw Pals Animal Assisted Education Program meets the complex needs of vulnerable and at-risk young people.

Key result areas and responsibilities

- Model a commitment to unconditional positive regard and trauma-informed practice, at all times
- Under the direction of the Paw Pals Coordinator, implement and oversee the Paw Pals Animal Assisted Education (AAE) Program, including school-based engagement and individualised education sessions for children and young people at risk
- Support the Paw Pals Coordinator in liaising and collaborating with schools and stakeholders during the assessment, planning, review and evaluation process of Paw Pals Animal Assisted Education (AAE) Programs
- Support the Paw Pals Coordinator to build new business leads in the South Eastern Suburbs
- Support the Paw Pals Coordinator to manage expression of interests
- Support the Paw Pals Coordinator with timetabling staff jobs in the South Eastern Suburbs
- Work under the direction of the Paw Pals Coordinator to design engaging learning activities centered around Animal Assisted Learning
- Provide regular informal and formal feedback to school staff and relevant stakeholders on student progress and program outcomes
- Maintain records of participation, attendance and student progress and prepare reports, as required
- Ensure the development and maintenance of appropriate networks and links within the school network and community
- Communicate, develop relationships, and engage students, at risk, in social, emotional and academic learning
- Maintain a safe and stimulating environment for student participation and engagement
- Maintain therapy dog qualifications and make a commitment to ongoing dog training and dog handler skills
- Maintain appropriate personal dog insurance and supply a copy to the Program Coordinator with each policy renewal
- Comply with MacKillop Family Services OH&S Policies
- Participate in appropriate development opportunities and annual performance reviews
- Contribute to the development and profile of MacKillop Education.
- Undertake other duties as required

Key selection criteria

- Experience working with a therapy dog, in an educational setting
- Relevant qualification and experience in working with animal assisted therapies, as well as owning a qualified therapy dog
- Experience working with vulnerable and at-risk young people and an understanding of how trauma impacts on learning
- Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written
- Excellent interpersonal skills, with a demonstrated capacity to work collaboratively with staff teams and other stakeholders
- Ability to work independently, to take initiative and a capacity for effective decision-making
- A demonstrated ability to manage and prioritise a range of tasks, plan workloads and work to deadlines
- An understanding and commitment to the objectives and values of the organisation and a capacity to represent MacKillop views as required by the role

Other information

The incumbent is required to:

- Sign and actively abide by MacKillop's Code of Conduct
- Observe and actively support MacKillop's WH&S policy and strategy
- Maintain a safe and tidy work environment to OH&S standards
- Promote an environment that is culturally safe and strengths focused
- Participate in and promote continuous quality improvement processes
- Abide by principles and commitments of the Sanctuary Framework
- Attend mandatory and other training as required

The incumbent must possess a:

- Their own qualified therapy dog or their own dog and be working towards therapy dog qualification
- Appropriate Working Dog Insurance for the duration of their employment
- Valid and current Driver's License; and
- Current Working with Children Check or VIT registration
- Satisfactory criminal history check conducted by MacKillop Family Services

Approval

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Approver's full name:	Anne Henderson	Date:	November 2021
Approver's position title:	Executive Principal, MacKillop Education		
Incumbent's full name:			
Incumbent's signature:		Date:	

