



THE WAY



FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL & HEAD OF JUNIOR SCHOOL

I am pleased to share with you that later this term we are looking to trial having a College Companion Dog called Barbara.

It has been an important year to seek and explore creative opportunities to enhance student wellbeing. We anticipate that adding a Companion Dog to our community will bring joy, as well as assisting students in new ways to engage with learning.

Barbara is an experienced Companion Dog and her breed is a “Groodle” (Golden Retriever/Poodle). Their hair is non-allergenic and part wool, so they do not moult. The Groodle is a breed of choice for Companion and Guide Dogs, as their hair is suitable for people with allergies.

While at College, Barbara will serve as a Companion Dog and also be a non-judgmental presence to students with anxiety. Companion Dogs are found in schools around the world to assist children with social and emotional learning needs, which in turn can assist with literacy development, self-esteem and enhanced classroom interactions. Research into the effects of Companion Dogs in schools highlight a range of positive outcomes including an increase in school attendance, gains in self-confidence, reading ability and language skills.

Other schools in NSW with Companion Dogs have been consulted to ensure we have considered all possible factors if we go ahead. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with great benefits to students, but also unexpected benefits to staff as well.

Please follow the [link](#) if you would like to read about the benefits of having a School Companion Dog.

Education will take place in classrooms educating all students on the right way to interact with Barbara, including how to approach a Companion Dog and proper hygiene-practice after coming into contact with her.

The trial will commence on Monday 16 November, with Barbara attending College one day a week under the care of College staff.

Barbara is a well-behaved dog with a calming temperament. She loves children and is keen to meet everyone.

Please let Mr Sale know if you have any questions or concerns at lsale@thac.nsw.edu.au.

Mrs Sandy Wheeler
Deputy Principal & Head of Junior School
