

BEHIND THE BADGE



"I love my job. I get very excited when it comes to working. I know as soon as I see the vest, and Officer Cleere puts it on me, it's time to go to work. "



BISD Officer Waffles

Learn more about your Bastrop ISD Police Department as we take time to highlight our officers.

Waffles

Officer Waffles joined the Bastrop ISD Police Department in 2017.



Since joining the Bastrop ISD Police Department in 2017, Officer Waffles has been a four legged celebrity within Bastrop ISD. And just like Hollywood celebrities, when Waffles arrives on campus, some students are thrilled to see the lovable pooch, while other students are intimidated and nervous in his presence.

His partner and owner, Officer Lisa Cleere explains, "If students have something to hide, they are worried about Waffles finding it. If they don't have anything to hide he is a welcome presence."

Officer Waffles is a pure Belgian Malinois. This dog breed is born with the word

"work" in its DNA and is known for being alert, hard working, watchful and protective. In other words, Officer Waffles found his calling being a police dog. To learn more about what it takes to be a successful police dog, we sat down for an interview with Officer Waffles. On that chilly fall day, Waffles was excited to give us more insight into how he became a police dog and what his job is like.

BISD: Do you like your job as police dog?

Waffles: Yes, especially when I get to go to the elementary schools and all the kids are excited to see me. I like the attention, but I have to refrain myself because the students aren't allowed to pet me.

BISD: We can see how that would be tricky for you, but you do a great job listening. Speaking of listening, you're trained to find narcotics. Did you have to listen and receive a lot of training to learn this skill?

Waffles: I was initially trained to be a search and rescue dog, but during training the handlers believed my strengths were in finding narcotics. I was trained at Southern Star K-9 in Florence. From start to finish it took about six months to train me. My trainer had been doing this for 30 years, which in dog years is a very, very long time.

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Officer Waffles is pictured with handler, Officer Lisa Cleere as they do a sweep through student lockers.

BISD: Only six months to train you?

Waffles: It depends on the drive and ambition of the dog. I'm ambitious, so it only took six months for me. I was trained as aggressive alert, which means when I discover an illegal substance I bark and scratch. But since I work with children now, I'm working on being more passive. This means when I find something illegal I sit and look at my partner, Officer Lisa Cleere.

BISD: It sounds like you're a top student. It's fitting that you work in a school district.

Waffles: I love learning. I think of it as a game. I'm trained to find marijuana, methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin, but I can sniff out other illegal substances too. My partner Officer Cleere and I are always training to make sure we keep Bastrop ISD safe and drug free.



DID YOU KNOW?

A canine has the ability to smell 100,000 times stronger than a human.

A properly trained police dog saves 600 to 1000 man-hours every year.

K-9 officers reduce the risk to human officers by alerting to danger long before a human can detect it.

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BISD: That's so important and we're so grateful to you. Do you take a lot of pride in your work?

Waffles: I love my job! I get very excited when it comes to working. I know as soon as I see the vest, and Officer Cleere puts it on me, it's time to go to work.

BISD: It sounds like you and your partner are close. How long have you been working together?

Waffles: Six years. She got me when I was a puppy. I'll be seven on March 25th. That's 42 in dog years. Fortunately, I'm able to skip past the dreaded 40th birthday!

BISD: Yes, we heard that can be a challenging birthday for some, but if it helps you still look like a puppy. This leads us to our next question. You're still young. Do you want to do anything else in your life?

Waffles: No. I love being part of Bastrop ISD Police Department.

BISD: What do you enjoy most about your job?

Waffles: I really love how each day is different. I sometimes cruise the halls at Bastrop High School, but then we can get a call and have to hop in the car to head to another school. It's constantly busy. But I have to say my favorite part of the job is working with the students at the elementary schools. Officer Cleere and I will go and do presentations and activities with students about the dangers of drugs and peer pressure.

BISD: That definitely sounds like a job perk. What is your least favorite part of the job?

Waffles: Sitting in the back of the police cruiser. I really like to be out walking the halls keeping the Bastrop ISD schools safe but this can be a tricky part of the job too. When I'm in the halls, I see all those kids and I just want to play with them. But then I have to stop myself and say, "Waffles, you're a professional!"

BISD: We're so grateful to you. We talked a lot about your time on the job, and we don't want to leave our readers wondering. What do you do on your days off?

Waffles: I like to sleep. Eat. Play. Occasionally, I like to chase a squirrel. In my free time, I really try to be like other dogs. This job can be rough. See what I did there?

BISD: Very clever Waffles! Thank you for all you do for Bastrop ISD.

