

Policy No. 37 Animals at School

The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.

Psalm 145:9

Rationale

To ensure that any animals on our property, involved in the education during the school day, are properly cared for and that all considerations are taken to ensure the welfare of the students and staff.

Background

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 is intended to prevent ill-treatment or neglect of animals. It sets out requirements for people who are in charge of animals and controls the use of animals in research, testing, and teaching. Under the Act, certain activities require ethical approval. Note that "animal" includes all vertebrates, lower vertebrates (such as frogs and fish), and some invertebrates (such as crabs and crayfish). Fetuses and embryonated eggs in the last half of gestation are also included.

The New Zealand Association of Science Educators (NZASE) established the Schools Animal Ethics Committee in 2005 to guide schools in meeting their legal requirements and in the management of animals in their care. NZASE provides resources for determining whether ethical approval is required, and is the body that considers applications. It receives applications from teachers, and also from individual students for specific investigations, science fairs, etc.

Most activities involving animals at school **do not** require ethical approval, for example, having a classroom pet, bringing pets in for a visit, simple observation of an animal. These activities are fun for students and educate them in many areas including animal care and handling, animal behaviour and life cycles, the natural world, responsibility, etc.

Procedures

Any animals at school need:

- suitable and adequate food and water
- shelter
- appropriate handling
- the opportunity to behave normally
- protection from injury and disease.

Any activity that is more involved than the examples above or that involves manipulation of the animal, must be approved before the activity begins. For more information, see NZASE

Do I Need Ethics Approval

Animals' temperament needs to be suitable to be able to cope in the environment in terms of the noise, physical environment, and interaction with people. Animals showing significant signs of stress such as avoidance, yawning, whale eyes etc. should be removed for their own safety, and the safety of others.

Animals should also have a minimum level of training, to be able to be under sufficient control. It is recommended that this includes a training based qualification and is receiving ongoing training.

Animals working for specific purposes in the WCS buildings must follow the guidelines below at all times, and have approval from the Principal to be assisting inside the building with students and their learning.

Therapy and support animals

These are animals that are not used as a planned curriculum example or in teaching and learning, but instead are at school for sustained periods of time in a physical and/or emotional support role for staff and/or students.

Appropriate situations or contexts that a therapy/support animal may be used include:

- Relief from stress, or anxiety
- Support in participation in classes, or physical events such as PE, sports days, cross country
- Motivation and rewarding attendance to school, and class
- Acclimatization to dogs for people with a fear of dogs, and helping them to learn an appropriate response.
- Physical therapy
- Working on empathy
- As an audience for students to read out loud too
- Working on social skills
- Or other similar tasks

In addition to meeting the guidelines below, animals working in a therapy and/or support role should be appropriately visually identifiable e.g. wearing a labelled vest, harness, bandana, or lead.

Therapy and support dogs in the WCS buildings must follow the guidelines below at all times, and have approval to be assisting inside the building with students and their learning.

Guidelines

The owner or trainer is responsible for ensuring the following guidelines are met:

- Animals must be kept under control, either in an enclosed space, and/or on lead, at all times.
- Animals must be free from parasites or contagious disease. Animals should be in good condition and bathed and groomed regularly to reduce hair, and dander in the building which may contribute to allergies.

- Animals should be seated in particular areas, and use set beds or other specific stationing equipment, to reduce the pet hair and dander on the furniture that the staff and students are using (and therefore issues for people with allergies).
- Animals must have a designated resting space away from the students, and access to water at all times in specific drinking water bowls.
- Animals must be registered with the council, and follow all other related laws and local authority regulations.
- Animals must also be cared for as described in the MPI animal welfare code of conduct.
- Dogs must have ample opportunity to have walks outside.
- Toileting must be in appropriate pre designated spaces. All waste must be removed by the owner.

Stray dogs

Any stray dog at school will be reported to dog control and taken away so there is no danger to our students.

Approval

Approval from the principal is required before an animal is brought to school for inclusion into a classroom environment.

Legislation

- Animal Welfare Act 1999
- The Wildlife Act 1953

Resources

- NZASE: **Use of Animals in Teaching and Schools**
- TKI: **Caring for Animals**

Conclusion

This Policy will be reviewed every five years or earlier if needed.

Chairman: _____

Date Approved: May 2021

Review Date:

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