



Draft policy on animals in early childhood education centres and schools

_____ ECE centre/school “Caring for Animals” policy

_____ ECE centre/school recognises its legal obligations to those species defined as “animals” under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and its moral responsibilities with regard to other invertebrate animals studied or kept in the ECE centre/school.

Goals

- To encourage, through example, the proper care of living things within _____ ECE centre/school situation.
- To provide opportunities for children/students to observe, handle, and care for a range of animals in humane ways.
- To ensure that, in any activity involving the keeping of an animal or its study on a field trip, the welfare of the animal is given high priority.
- To educate children/students by example and discussion about the importance of caring for animals and the responsibilities this involves.
- To work toward some achievement aims within:
 - Nature of Science: [level 1, 2 and 3 Investigating in science and Participating and contributing](#)
 - Living World: [level 1, 2 and 3 Ecology and life processes](#)

Guidelines

1. The day-to-day care of all vertebrates, and some invertebrates, in the care of people and/or used in experiments and teaching will be governed by the Animal Welfare Act 1999.
2. All living creatures at _____ ECE centre/school will be treated with care and respect.
3. Responsibility for the welfare of animals in _____ ECE centre/school rests with the teacher involved and, ultimately, with the principal and the board of trustees/ECE centre management.
4. Animals kept at _____ ECE centre/school will be provided with their five basic needs (sometimes expressed as the five freedoms).
 - Freedom from thirst, hunger, and malnutrition (including during weekends and holidays).
 - Freedom from discomfort and lack of shelter (by being provided with appropriate cages or containers that are properly ventilated and hygienic and do not allow exposure to extremes of noise, draughts, and sunlight).
 - Freedom from injury, disease, and parasite infestation (by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment). Diseased or injured animals will be treated promptly and will not be kept at _____ ECE centre/school until they have recovered. If this is not feasible, they will be humanely destroyed.
 - Freedom from distress (through proper care and handling).
 - Freedom to display their normal patterns of behaviour.

Caring for Animals

If appropriate care and facilities cannot be provided, animals will not be kept at -
5. _____ ECE centre/school.

Animals kept at _____ ECE centre/school will be kept in accordance with the conditions, relevant to the particular species, outlined in Section 3 of *Caring for Animals*, 1999.
6. Species not covered by this section will not be kept/will be kept only if _____ (select the desired option and insert the circumstances or conditions that apply).

In the case of centre/classroom pets, prior arrangements about long-term care (including holiday care) will be made before any animals are kept at _____ ECE centre/school. When the animal is no longer required or is no longer able to be kept, appropriate
7. arrangements will be made to return it to its natural habitat (in the case of a wild animal) or to find a suitable home for it. Non-native classroom pets will not be released into the wild under any circumstances. If appropriate arrangements cannot be made, the animal will be humanely destroyed by a veterinarian.

When animals are used for a specific study, the surviving animals will be returned to their
8. natural habitat or home at the end of the study.

Animals captured on field trips will be returned to their habitat before children/students leave
9. the area unless their proper care in _____ ECE centre/school has been prearranged.

Native animals:

10.

- will not be kept at _____ ECE centre/school,
- will be kept only if _____ (select the desired option and insert the circumstances or conditions that apply). Note that, under the Wildlife Act 1953, it is illegal to keep any species of native animal without a permit from the Department of Conservation.

Where the use of animals in any study (including science fair projects) involves a manipulation in accordance with the law, the study will be carried out in accordance with a code of ethical conduct approved by the [Ministry for Primary Industries](#) and with the prior approval of -
11. _____ (specify the name of an animal ethics committee that has been established in accordance with that code). (See [Ethical approval to manipulate animals for information on animal ethics committees.](#))

Signed: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

Review date: _____