

New Zealand Association of Science Educators

Schools' Animal Ethics Committee

**Code of
Ethical Conduct
for the use of animals**

October 2014

**CODE OF ETHICAL
CONDUCT
APPROVED**


- (1) Name of code holder: **President of New Zealand Association of Science Educators (NZASE)**
- (2) Name of company/institution or whether an individual: **NZASE**
- (3) Position of code holder: **President NZASE**
- (4) Site/location of company/institution where activity is to take place:
Early childhood centres, kindergartens, primary, intermediate/middle and secondary schools, and students' homes across New Zealand
- (5) Postal address:
**Schools' Animal Ethics Committee
PO Box 10122
WELLINGTON 6143**
Email: **animalethicscommittee@nzase.org.nz**
- (6) Particulars of any convictions as specified under section 89(1)(c) of the Act: **No convictions**
- (7) A brief summary of the general nature and extent of the research, or teaching in which the applicant will be engaged:

The NZASE Schools' Code of Ethical Conduct is designed so that early childhood educational centres, kindergartens, primary, intermediate/middle and secondary schools and home schooled students are able to use specified animals in research and teaching in compliance with the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act). The Code also covers individual or groups of students of school age who are participants in programmes and regional and national events such as Science and Technology Fairs, CREST Awards and the Bright Sparks Programme. Applicants for ethical approval will be teachers, principals, head teachers, centre managers, parents, caregivers and students, hereafter referred to as investigators.

Statement of the period in respect of which the approval is sought:
January 2015 through to December 2019

- (8) State whether you have applied for work under any other Code of Ethical Conduct in New Zealand. If the answer is "yes", provide details here: **Yes, this Code is a revised version of the NZASE's Code of Ethical Conduct operating from October 2009 to December 2014.**

This is to certify that the code holder undertakes to conform with all the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and will ensure that all persons involved in the animal manipulations and carrying out of these activities are appropriate persons according to that Act. It is accepted that the code holder is also responsible for distributing information on the requirements of the Act to the Schools' Animal Ethics Committee to help ensure that the Schools' Animal Ethics Committee follows the requirements of the law.

Signature of applicant  Date 5/11/2014

Steven Sexton
President, New Zealand Association of Science Educators (NZASE)

Description of the general nature and extent of the work

The NZASE recognises the role of animals in research, testing and teaching in society, and that the use of animals in teaching and investigations, including in schools, has a cost that must be weighed against the potential benefit obtained. Animals used in teaching and research have made major contributions to biological knowledge, including in the areas of welfare of humans and animals, and this knowledge is available to school students as they enter into tertiary education in pathways of medicine, biomedical science and agriculture. For students to have an understanding of the ethical use of animals in teaching and research is of benefit to the community in which they live and are becoming adult members.

This Code of Ethical Conduct is designed to comply with all the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act) so that the specified animals can be used in teaching and research in New Zealand early childhood educational centres, kindergartens, primary, intermediate/middle and secondary schools and by those students who are home schooled. It is also to cover individual or groups of students of school age who are participants in programmes and regional and national events such as Science and Technology Fairs, CREST Awards and the Bright Sparks Programme. Applicants for ethical approval will be teachers, principals, head teachers, centre managers, parents, caregivers and students, hereafter referred to as investigators.

The purpose of Part 6 (Use of Animals in Research, Testing and Teaching) of the Act is to ensure, among other things, that the findings of research, testing and teaching involving animals enhances the achievement of educational objectives and that these benefits are not outweighed by the likely harm to the animals. Furthermore, it requires that the physical, health and behavioural needs of animals are considered, alternatives to using animals are considered where possible, or techniques are chosen that alleviate or minimise harm to animals.

The animals will be used for teaching and research purposes after approval by the Schools' Animal Ethics Committee (AEC). Such use will be monitored, where practical, in accordance with the procedures outlined in this Code by the AEC, ensuring that animal welfare is paramount at all times. All animals, including invertebrates, should where practicable be given the same level of humane care and attention as animals which are covered by the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (e.g. dogs, cats, sheep, birds, fish and crabs).

NEW ZEALAND
SCHOOLS' ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

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Part 1: Animal Ethics Committee

The Schools' Animal Ethics Committee considers, and where appropriate approves and monitors, applications to use live animals in school teaching and research, in compliance with the Animal Welfare Act 1999. For convenience the NZASE shall operate this AEC from Wellington.

The committee membership shall comply with section 101 of the Act.

The Code Holder (President, NZASE) shall appoint:

- An independent Chairperson (after consultation with the AEC)
- One experienced member of the biological science secondary teaching profession nominated by the NZASE as required in section 101 (4).
- One member engaged in biological scientific research appointed by a recognised tertiary institution
- One veterinarian appointed by the Code Holder on the nomination of the New Zealand Veterinary Association
- One member appointed by the Code Holder on the nomination of a territorial authority or regional council
- One member appointed by the Code Holder on the nomination of an approved organisation concerned with the welfare of animals.

1. The committee shall elect the Deputy Chairperson.
2. Appointments to the committee shall be for an initial term of three years.
3. Appointments to the committee may second additional members to provide appropriate expertise as needed.
4. No member of the AEC shall be personally liable for any act done or omitted by the member of the committee in good faith in the course of the operations of the committee.
5. A secretary will be appointed to the AEC by NZASE, to carry out the secretarial duties of the committee.

Appointment and replacement procedures

1. Appointments shall be made in compliance with the Act. Internal appointments (ie members who also belong to NZASE) shall be made by the National Executive of NZASE. Appointments strive to provide the best possible representation for the range of the sectors of the education community and the range of the ages of the students that will use the committee. External appointments shall be made following nominations from the four outside organisations involved. Replacement procedures shall follow the appointment procedures.
2. Reappointments shall be confirmed with the relevant nominating agencies.

3. In the event of any appointee being unable to attend meetings on a regular basis, the Chairperson or his or her designee, shall contact that appointee to investigate reasons for such lack of participation. If reasonable measures cannot be taken to resume committee participation within a reasonable timeframe, an alternative appointment shall be made.

Training of new members

NZASE will consider a succession plan to ensure that the knowledge of the Committee is maintained, and the members remain motivated and skilled. New members are supplied with all current Committee documents including;

- Schools' AEC Operations Manual
- Schools' AEC Code of Ethical Conduct
- NAEAC AEC New Member Induction Pack

Remuneration for members

Members shall be paid a meeting attendance fee to cover their time and reasonable travel expenses. A proportional fee may be paid to members who are unable to attend committee meetings, but have given apologies in advance and provided written comments on the applications assigned to them for review.

Strategies to ensure effective input by external members

1. A complete set of AEC documents shall be circulated to all committee members at least 5 working days before each meeting. The committee meetings provide the opportunity for free and frank discussion, with all members having equal opportunity to contribute to the business of the meeting.
2. Decisions are reached by consensus. Further information relating to decision-making is stated below. Should a subcommittee be set up, external members are required to participate in such meetings, whenever these are held.

Part 2: AEC Policies and Procedures

Appointment of Chairpersons and election of Deputy Chairpersons

The President of NZASE shall appoint an independent Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson shall be elected by the AEC.

Frequency of meetings and distribution of agenda

1. In general, the frequency of meetings shall be determined by the workload requirements, i.e. the numbers of applications to use live animals in teaching and research. Details of meetings schedules will be agreed by the committee at the end of the previous calendar year.
2. The committee secretary shall prepare a draft agenda to be circulated to all members at least a week prior to the meeting. All committee members have an opportunity to request that items be added to the agenda.

A quorum

A quorum shall consist of four members, of which at least two must be statutory external members.

Secretariat support

A secretary shall be appointed to the committee. The secretary shall prepare the agenda, draft the minutes and circulate the documentation and correspondence used by the committee.

Decision making

1. Decisions shall be made after all committee members present have had the opportunity to express their views. Decision by consensus is a fundamental principle of the committee process. In the event that any committee member expresses strong concerns that are contrary to the majority, the Chairperson may convene a subcommittee to explore the matter further.
2. The subcommittee must include the individual(s) with the minority opinion. The subcommittee will be required to report back to the full committee.

Possible fast track provisions

The Schools' AEC recognises that students in particular may leave their applications till the very last minute and that their proposed research will have little or no impact on animal welfare. The AEC shall both manage student needs and promote animal welfare by the provision of interim approval. These shall be issued on a case by case basis, as determined by either:

1. the AEC, or
2. a subcommittee which comprises the Chairperson of the AEC (or her or his delegate) and two external members of the AEC.

Interim approval shall be confirmed in writing and the secretary of the AEC shall maintain copies of the approval. Interim approval shall be formally ratified at the next AEC meeting. Interim approvals may be considered when the AEC is satisfied with the justification provided by the applicant. Interim approval shall not be given for investigators who have simply failed to meet a submission deadline; unless the committee is satisfied that acceptable and appropriate extenuating circumstances apply. Interim approvals are only considered for projects with 0, A or B grading.

Use of subcommittees

Subcommittees shall be established as needed, to provide additional in-depth review of applications or to deal with other matters of concern to the committee. Each subcommittee shall be established at the recommendation of the Chairperson, who will determine the terms of reference and the subcommittee membership. The subcommittee will include members of the AEC, and may also request input from outside experts. Written or oral reports of the findings of the subcommittee shall be provided to the full committee, normally by the next full meeting. Additional information is provided under the decision making section above.

Terms of Reference

1. To review all projects involving the use of animals for teaching or research purposes in the institutions outlined in each application or by students for the described events, to ensure that adequate consideration is given to the humane treatment of animals according to the principles outlined in the Act, with particular reference to the principles of Reduction, Refinement and Replacement, and any additional requirements of the Ministry of Education.
2. All animal manipulation protocols and applications for the use of animals for teaching and research shall be reviewed and approved by the committee prior to commencement. Applicants must use the forms provided. The committee may provide advice on all matters pertaining to the acquisition, supply and welfare of animals involved in manipulation within the compulsory education sector as described in each application, or animals involved in field studies performed by personnel listed on the approved application form.
3. The Committee shall have a strong educational role, which recognises that in general animal manipulations are very low grade, and applicants are young school children.
Where appropriate, applicants will be offered help with science and animal welfare-related aspects to a proposed application, whether or not the application requires ethics approval.
Where there is significant use of invertebrate species, an application to the Committee is also encouraged (although it is not required by the Act) as a worthwhile process for students to go through.
4. Applicants are required to provide a written report back to the AEC at the end of the project, which include outcomes including any adverse events.
5. The Committee may be required by the Code Holder to collect relevant information with regard to the legislation in order for the Ministry of Education to meet its regulatory compliance responsibilities, for example the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO).
6. If applicants wish to change an approval protocol, permission must be sought from the committee. Guidelines for the modification of protocols will be provided once the nature of the change has been assessed by the committee.
7. The Committee may suspend or revoke approvals when it is clear that the welfare of an animal, or animals, is being compromised, or is likely to be compromised.
8. An applicant may be asked to attend (in person or via telephone) a meeting of the Committee to assist it with the approval process.
9. The Committee may delegate the monitoring of animal manipulations and site visit inspections of animal-use areas, to suitably qualified personnel as determined by the committee. Written reports to the committee by the delegated authority shall be required.

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10. The Code Holder may make minor amendments to the Code of Ethical Conduct from time to time, as considered necessary after consultation with the AEC. The Code Holder will give the Director-General, in writing, particulars of those minor amendments as soon as practicable after the end of the year, as specified in section 95 of the Act.

Information storage

1. The secretary of the AEC maintains records of all applications, minutes and committee correspondence. The documents are held in secure storage.
2. The Chairperson shall also hold copies of the above documents, maintained in secure storage. AEC members who retain copies shall ensure that they are destroyed at the end of their term on the committee.
3. Records shall be kept for not less than the period of 5 years beginning with the expiry of the year in respect of which the records were kept.

Policy on the use of teleconferences

The NZASE believes that the functions of the AEC are best fulfilled when the committee members have the opportunity to meet in person. This facilitates a free and frank exchange of ideas and promotes the opportunity for members to participate fully in the review process. Teleconferences are regarded as satisfactory for the committee operation between meetings. Meeting should be held twice yearly if possible.

Management of possible conflict of interest by the AEC members

1. Committee members must declare any potential conflict of interest concerns to the Chairperson of the AEC, prior to the matter concerned being discussed.
2. The Chairperson shall be responsible for establishing the protocol adopted to manage such potential conflict on a case by case basis.

Part 3: Additional protocols

Policies of the NZASE relevant to the use of animals in teaching and research

The following operating guidelines shall be made available to all applicants on the NZASE website:

- a) submission deadlines of the applications for committee review
- b) types of application forms used to apply for approval
- c) the approval process and notification of the review outcome
- d) procedures for the renewal of applications
- e) the collection of animal use statistics
- f) the 'protocol modification process' including requests for additional animals and changes to investigations
- g) guidelines and assistance available for new investigators completing the applications for the first time
- h) monitoring of investigations by the AEC
- i) any information on animal welfare the AEC considers necessary.

Part 4: Monitoring and compliance

Monitoring of manipulations

1. At the time of application review, the AEC shall determine whether a site visit inspection of the proposed investigation(s) will be required.
Projects graded C, D or E will all be monitored. Other applications are considered for a site visit on a case by case basis, having regard for the following: training and experience of the applicant(s), the nature of the investigation, numbers of animals proposed and any other matter that committee members believe is relevant.
2. The AEC may also elect to make a site visit at any time during the life of the approved application. Members of the AEC, or personnel nominated on their behalf on a case-by-case basis, may conduct site visits. Such personnel will be experienced teachers of biological science, national judges and regional chief judges of Science and Technology Fairs, CREST Awards assessors, experienced researchers of biological science, members of approved animal welfare organisations, and approved veterinarians.
3. Follow-up visits shall be made as considered necessary to review any changes in animal investigations.
4. Site visits shall be documented in writing, with copies sent to the AEC, the investigator and his/her immediate manager/caregiver/parent. Site visit reports shall be tabled at the next AEC meeting.

The operation of animal facilities

1. Where a school operates an animal facility under the auspices of this Code of Ethical Conduct, there will be a person who functions as the Facility Manager, who shall report to the AEC, as detailed below. They are responsible for the daily operation of the animal care programme within the limits of the available resources. The Managers are required to report any significant animal welfare concerns to the Chairperson of the AEC.
2. Facility Managers must use standard operating procedures as outlined in the publication *Caring for Animals*, Ministry of Education 1999, to ensure a uniform level of animal husbandry and welfare.
3. Monitoring the animal facilities will be performed as follows:
The Facility Managers shall perform an annual review of their animal care procedures. The purpose is to review the operation of the unit and address any concerns. A copy of this review is to be sent to the AEC. The AEC may at any time appoint a suitably qualified person to inspect the animal facility.

Part 5: Information management

1. A person with appropriate skills shall be employed to act as a secretary to the AEC. The secretary shall maintain records of agenda, minutes, decisions, correspondence with investigators, site visit reports, application forms and all other relevant documentation. Secure storage shall be maintained.
2. The AEC Chairperson may also hold copies of approved animal use application forms in secure storage. All working documentation provided to each AEC member shall normally be returned to the committee for destruction at the end of each meeting.

Part 6: Application Approval

Applications to the AEC may be responded to in the following ways:

- a) approved
- b) approved with provisos – these are able to be approved by the Chairperson once he/she is satisfied that the student has addressed the committees concerns
- c) deferred – the applicant is required to make adjustments to the application before resubmitting it to the committee
- d) declined – the committee must provide in writing its reasons for declining the application

The AEC may suspend or revoke approvals.

Approval Terms

Schools (including home schools)

Teachers applying on behalf of schools or early childhood centres will be eligible for three year approvals. If there are changes to the procedures for the approved manipulation then the application must be re-submitted for re-approval.

Students (whether at school or home schooled)

For Science and Technology Fair investigations, CREST Awards, and Bright Sparks investigations the students are to be the applicants for the ethical approval, not their teachers, parents or caregivers.

Students involved in Gold CREST may have two year approvals to cover the full term of their project.

All other approvals are for the term stated in the application (this is a specified short-term period, often in the period following the meeting at which approval is granted).

In all of the above situations, approvals are not transferable from student to student, teacher to teacher or school to school

Part 7: Animal use statistical returns

All investigators are required to make an annual return to the AEC to report on their use of animals in the investigations. This shall be within one month of the completion of the project, and before 1 December in each year, to enable the AEC to meet regulatory requirements. The report is only required on the animals covered by the Animal Welfare Act 1999, 2. **Interpretation** (a), (b) and (c).

Part 8: Annual report

The AEC shall prepare an annual report of the committee activity for the NZASE. This shall be received by the end of February in the following year.

Part 9: Complaints procedures on the part of AEC members, applicants, work associates or the public

1. Procedures and policies shall be put in place to ensure that any complaints from members of the AEC, applicants, work associates or the public are dealt with fairly.
2. Complaints shall be addressed in the first instance to the Chairperson of the AEC (or the Deputy Chair if the complaint relates to the Chair). Such complaints will normally be requested in writing. The Chairperson will investigate the matter and may consult with other personnel as needed. The Chairperson will refer the matter to the next AEC meeting for consideration. If necessary the affected member may be asked to leave during discussions of the matter.
3. If the matter cannot be resolved within the committee, it shall be referred to the President of NZASE.
4. Investigation of potential non-compliance issues:
Non-compliance concerns shall be addressed in writing to the Chairperson of the AEC in the first instance. The AEC shall follow the guidelines for non-compliance investigations. The process shall include consultation with the teacher or the principal investigator involved and his or her staff (where appropriate) as required. The committee shall inform the teacher or the principal investigator of its decision in writing including any warnings, revocations or deferment of privileges to use animals.

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