

# ANIMAL CODE OF ETHICS

Reviewed 22.05.09 (Donal, Alan, Hine, Shirley and Maria H)  
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## ACTION

1. To encourage through example the proper care of living things within the school situation.
2. To provide experiences for children to observe, handle and care for a range of animals in a humane way.
3. To ensure that the care and welfare of animals has the highest priority in any activity involving the keeping of an animal or its study on a field trip or related activities.
4. To educate children through examples and discussion on the importance of animal care and welfare and the responsibilities involved.

## GUIDELINES

1. Animal is defined as any living creature with a backbone, including land-based and aquatic mammals, birds, fish and reptiles.
2. It is generally accepted that other living creatures such as snails, worms and insects must also be treated with care and kindness.
3. If the appropriate care cannot be provided, the animals should not be kept in school.
4. Creatures kept in classrooms for observation must be housed and fed properly and returned to their natural habitat on completion of the study.
5. Refer to the discipline procedure to deal with any children or adults who wilfully seek to hurt or cause discomfort to any living thing. This would be viewed as a serious breach of discipline.
6. Responsibility for the welfare of animals rests with the teacher/staff member involved, but ultimately with the Principal and Board of Trustees.  
The following freedoms apply:
  - (A) Animals must have appropriate diet, including access to water. Provision must be made for care at weekends and holidays.
  - (B) Animals must have cages/containers of an appropriate size, be ventilated and hygienic. Animals must not be subjected to extremes of noise, draught or sunlight.
  - (C) Animals should be free from injury or disease. Diseased or injured animals should be treated and should not be kept at school.
  - (D) Animals must be handled/kept in such a way that they are not subjected to stress or fear.
  - (E) Animals should be able to express normal behaviour.
7. Injured creatures should be used as a Model for how animals should be treated. Teachers made aware of such instances should review processes with appropriate persons.  
E.g. The "Bird Woman", SPCA etc.

The Ministry of Education advises that schools who manipulate animals as part of their programmes need to enter into an arrangement and seek approval from an Animal Ethics Committee (AEC). A list of committees is available from the Biosecurity Authority at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The Ministry of Education recommends that if schools are keeping animals, they should have an animals' policy that has been approved by their board of trustees. This policy must not contravene the Animal Welfare Act 1999. Section 2.3 of Caring for Animals provides a draft policy on caring for animals in schools that may be adopted or adapted by schools. (ERO Handbook for Schools June 2010 – A11; Animal Welfare)