Animals in Schools Policy and Guidelines
July 2022

Summary

This policy applies to Community Language Schools SA and all member schools.

Table 1: Document Details

Policy Number	**ES48**
Related Policies	ES02: Risk Management Policy ES7B: General Student Health Support Form ES08: Emergency and Critical Incident Policy ES08A: Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Form ES09: Supervision of Students Policy ES23: Work Health and Safety Policy ES36: Excursion and Incursion Policy and Procedures ES37: Medication, Accident and First Aid Policy ES37A: Medical Management Forms ES40: Special Needs Policy ES42: Student Personal Care Policy and Guidelines ES48A: Animals in School Planning Form
Version	1.1
Created by	CLSSA Policy Officer
Reviewed by	CLSSA Executive Officer
Applies to	All Community Language Schools
Key Words	Animals; Pets; Guide Dogs; Assistance Animals; Animal welfare; Wellbeing; Emergency and critical incident; Death of an animal; Animal cruelty; Educational justification for animals; *Animal Welfare Act 1985*
Status	Approved
Approved By	CLSSA Board *(Administrative updates approved by Executive Officer)*
Approval Date	July 2022
Review Date	December 2023
Notes	Administrative update only

Table 2: Revision Record

Date	Version	Revision Description
30th June 2019	1.0	• New policy developed
18th January 2021	1.0	• Added policy in Related Policies (Table 1)
December	1.1	• Changed policy name from 'Animals in School Policy' to Animals in

2021		Schools Policy and Guidelines'
July 2022	1.1	• Administrative update only

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Animals in Schools Policy and Guidelines

Introduction

Community Language Schools are committed to ensuring that all animals used for educational purposes have appropriate standards of welfare. It is the teacher's responsibility to provide a pedagogical and evidence-based justification for any learning activity that involves the use of animals. The use of animals must provide an added component to the learning that is not trivial or available in other ways.

The Animals in Schools Policy applies during school hours, before and after school, during school events, excursions and incursions and any other school related activity. This policy is based on the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes and the *Animal Welfare Act 1985*.

Definitions

Animal: any living non-human vertebrate (that is, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals encompassing domestic animals, purpose-bred animals, livestock, wildlife) and cephalopods

Animal welfare: an animal's quality of life, which encompasses the diverse ways an animal may perceive and respond to their circumstances, ranging from a positive state of wellbeing to a negative state of distress.

Assistance animal: is a dog or other animal accredited or trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability

Ethics: are a set of moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or actions that can be considered as good or bad, right or wrong. Ethics also include how an activity is or will be conducted. Ethics is applied in the evaluation of what should or should not be done when animals are proposed for use, or are used, for scientific purposes.

Harm: a negative impact on the wellbeing of an animal.

Scientific purposes: all activities conducted with the aim of acquiring, developing or demonstrating knowledge or techniques in all areas of science, including teaching, field trials, environmental studies, research (including the creation and breeding of a new animal line where the impact on animal wellbeing is unknown or uncertain), diagnosis, product testing and the production of biological products

Teacher: any person in charge of a teaching activity

Wellbeing: an animal is in a positive mental state and is able to achieve successful biological function, to have positive experiences, to express innate behaviours, and to respond to and cope with potentially adverse conditions. Animal wellbeing may be assessed by physiological and behavioural measures of an animal's physical and psychological health and of the animal's

capacity to cope with stressors, and species-specific behaviours in response to social and environmental conditions.

Wildlife: free-living animals of native or introduced species, including those that are captive bred and those captured from free-living populations.

Policy

Community Language Schools will maintain comprehensive records documenting acquisition, disposal and all husbandry activities carried out with the animals kept by the school for educational purposes. Any teacher at a Community Language School wishing to incorporate a living animal into their educational program must provide a comprehensive plan to the principal. Community Language Schools requires teachers to complete the Animal in Schools Planning Form prior to acquiring an animal. Principal approval is required before the acquisition of any animal. The plan must outline procedures for:

- Feeding
- Housing
- Costs
- Cleaning
- Vet care
- Care during non-school hours
- Long-term plan for the care

Community Language Schools will permit very low or low impact activities involving animals. These activities do not need any type of approval from an Ethics Committee or licence for teaching and research involving animals. These activities include:

- Observation of animal behaviour
- Observation of pets under the owner's control
- Excursions to observe animals in their natural surroundings or to zoos and other registered wildlife parks
- Excursions to farms for observation of animal behaviour and husbandry activities appropriate to the age, prior experience and maturity of the students

Teachers who use animals for educational purposes are responsible for assisting students to develop a respect for animals and to understand the ethical issues involved in the use of animals. Community Language Schools will ensure that all staff and student allergies are considered prior to acquiring or using animals for educational purposes.

Invertebrate animals are permitted for educational purposes at a Community Language School with appropriate educational justification and comprehensive plan. Examples of invertebrate animals that can be used are

- Insects: grasshoppers, crickets, cockroach, stick insects;
- Beetles;
- Hermit crabs;
- Garden snails;
- Garden slugs;
- Garden worms, earthworms, silk worms.

Invertebrates or animals that are endangered, poisonous, or their sting or bite may cause a reaction are not permitted.

Educational Justification

The Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes states that animals may be used for teaching only when there are no suitable alternatives available for achieving the educational objectives. Community Language School will determine educational objectives in response to the national curriculum requirements, government and system priorities, community needs and student learning needs. The use of animals in Community Language Schools' educational programs may be justified from one or more of the following objectives.

1. Developing students' skills in relation to responsible animal care and management;
2. Developing students' skills in observing animals to enhance their understanding of the behavioural characteristics of a species;
3. Developing students' skills of investigation where the purpose is to improve methods of animal management;
4. Assisting students to develop empathy with and respect for animals.

Pets and Assistance Animals

Animals or pets are not permitted on Community Language Schools grounds unless prior approval has been sought from the Principal. A therapy animal provides affection and comfort for a person and is not considered an assistance animal. Therapy animals are not required to meet any legislated standards and have not been trained to assist a person with a disability. Therapy animals are considered as pets and will not be permitted at a Community Language School without prior approval.

Guide Dogs and trained Assistance Dogs or animals under the supervision of a trainer or handler are exempt from the Animals for Schools Policy. Community Language Schools requires

written notification for the use of Guide Dogs or Assistance Animals. Written notification will allow the school the opportunity to:

- Inform teachers and all necessary staff;
- Conduct any necessary training for staff and students;
- Ensure the needs of the animal are met;
- Ensure reasonable adjustments can be made to schools facilities.

If an Assistance Animal is required, the owner will:

- Provide adequate care for the animal with respect to food, water, health, handling and appropriate training;
- Ensures that the assistance animal remains under the direct supervision of the student and/or owner
- Ensures that the assistance animal remains under the control of the student that requires assistance;
- Be entirely responsible for providing and paying for any veterinary treatment required by the animal.

The Principal of a Community Language School will consider if the request for an assistance animal causes unjustifiable hardship to the school, staff or other students. If the Principal has concerns that the Assistance Animals presents a danger to other persons on school premises, the Principal will raise the issue with the owner and obtain any relevant information that will enable the Principal to assess the risk and make a decision.

A request of an Assistance Animal may be refused by a Community Language School if:

- The student/parents/owner do not provide evidence that the animal is an assistance animal and is trained to meet standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place;
- The animal is suspected to have an infectious disease;
- The animal is a danger to public health or the health of other animals.
- The host school does not permit animals on site

Before refusing a request for an assistance animal, the Principal will discuss the concerns with the owners and a plan of action determined.

Excursions and Incursions Involving Animals

Excursions and incursions enhance the education program offered at Community Language Schools and will follow the procedures set out in this policy for the use of animals for school activities. Any excursion or incursion involving animals must be disclosed using the **ES36A**

Excursion and Incursion Consent Form. Students must be directly supervised at all times during an excursion or incursion involving animals. Community Language Schools will follow the procedures for planning an excursion or incursion as outlined in **ES36** Excursion and Incursion Policy and Procedures.

Emergency and Critical Incident

Community Language Schools will ensure that **ES08** Emergency and Critical Incident Policy and Procedures outlines procedures to ensure the welfare of animals is safeguarded in the event of flood, fire, drought, storm damage and vandalism. In the event on any incident involving an animal the **ES08A** Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Form needs to be completed.

Community Language Schools will implement the following procedures in the event that an animal escapes

- Ask students to remain where they are and to be seated (if children are in the classroom)
- Ask students to keep calm and quite so not to scare the animal
- The teacher will attempt to recapture the animal, ensuring the wellbeing of the animal is maintained
- Return the animal to the housing
- Review the housing to prevent the animal from escaping again
- Inquire into the events leading up to the animal escaping to ascertain whether any person is responsible
- Discuss with students the importance of ensuring the housing is secure

Death of an Animal

Animals that die may have a profound effect on children. The death of any animal that is used for educational purposes will be managed in a sensitive and caring manner. The teacher who is responsible for the animal will discuss openly with students, in a manner that is age appropriate, that death is a natural part of the life cycle of all living things. All parents of the children in the class must be informed via writing of the death of the animal.

Animal Cruelty

Community Language Schools will not tolerate any forms of animal cruelty to any animal. All forms of animal cruelty or harm will be reported to the RSPCA on 1300 477 722 or via http://www.rspcasa.org.au/services/inspectorate/report-cruelty/.

The *Animal Welfare Act (1985)* defines an animal as a subphylum vertebrata or an amphibian, reptiles, birds or mammals. Fish and humans are excluded from this act. Part 3, Section 13, states a person who is guilty of ill treatment to an animal.

(1) If –

a. A person ill-treats an animal; and

b. The ill treatment causes death of, or serious harm to, the animal; and

c. The person intends to cause, or is reckless about causing, the death of, or serious harm to, the animal,

A maximum penalty of $50 000 or imprisonment for 4 years may apply.

Supervision of Students

Students at Community Language Schools will be supervised according to the procedures outline in **ES09** Supervision of Students Policy and Procedures. Depending on the type of animal, learning activity and environment will determine the type of supervision. Table 1 outlines the type of supervision that it will use when learning activities involve animals.

Table 3: Supervision of students during learning activities involving animals

Activity	Type of Supervision	Notes
Assistance Animals	Direct Supervision	The handler or owner is to provide direct supervision of any assistance animals
	General Supervision	The teacher is to provide general supervision of all students in the presence on any assistance animals
Emergency or Critical Incident	Direct Supervision	In the event of an emergency, the teacher is responsible for both students and the animal. The first priority of the teacher is the safety and well-being of students.
Excursions or incursions	Direct Supervision	The operator, owner or animal handler will provide direct supervision of students of all children participating in activities where animals are to be handled by children.
	General Supervision	The teacher, parental volunteers or volunteers will provide general supervision of all children participating in any activities involving any animals.
Animal Observations in the animals natural environment	General Supervision	The teacher is to provide general supervision of all students when observing animals in their natural habitat. For example: an activity involving the identification of insects on school grounds.
Animal Observations of animals kept in the classroom	General Supervision	The teacher is to provide general supervision of all students when observing animals that are kept in the classroom. All animals are to be housed appropriately and have approval from the Principal of a Community Language Schools.

Risk Management

The teacher organising the learning activity involving the use of animals, and the Principal of Community Language Schools will need to complete a risk assessment for the learning activity. Community Language Schools has a dedicated policy outlining the procedures for conducting a risk assessment. For further details refer to **ES02** Risk Management Policy.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the School Administrator and/or Principal to:

- A comprehensive plan is provided by teachers who wish to use animals or invertebrates for education purposes;
- A risk assessment is completed for any animal or invertebrate;
- Emergency procedures are updated and implemented to reflect the management of the wellbeing any animal or vertebrate;
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community regarding interactions with animals;
- Ensure owners of any assistance animals or guide dogs provide evidence accreditation or training;
- Review request of assistance animals or guide dogs on a case by case and liaise with families to consider the needs of the child and animal;
- In the event of a critical incident involving a student and an animal, Community Language Schools will follow the procedures outlined in **ES08** Emergency and Critical Incident Policy and Procedures and complete an **ES08A** Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Form.

References and Other Documentation

- Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th Ed. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council: Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes | NHMRC
- Department of Education and Training (2022) Procedure: Assistance animals in schools: Assistance animals and support animals at school procedure (qed.qld.gov.au)
- NSW Department of Education – NSW Catholic Education Commission – Association of Independent Schools of NSW (2018. Animals in Schools Educational Justification: Educational justification - Animals in Schools (nswschoolanimals.com)
- Australian Museum (2007) Quick Invertebrate Guide: An introduction to identifying Australian invertebrates: Quick Invertebrate Guide.4e16695.pdf (australian.museum)