



POLICY DOCUMENT

Dogs at School

Responsibility: Principal
Revised: 2021
Next Review: 2025

PURPOSE:

To ensure Mill Park Primary School complies with legislation and codes to ensure the responsible care of animals used for scientific purposes, in teaching.

GUIDELINES:

The following aspects must be considered when planning to use animals in teaching:

- Provide an educational justification for the use of animals in school contexts. When planning learning programs consider other alternatives available to animal use. Consider if it is possible to replace, reduce or refine the use of animals in teaching.
- Provide conditions and management appropriate to the behavioural and physical needs of any animals used for educational purposes.
- Be responsible for assisting students to develop a respect for animals and to understand the ethical issues involved in the use of animals.
- Treat all animals with respect and consideration, ensuring that the level of care for animals is maintained over holidays and weekends.
- Gain approval from the Victorian Schools Animal Ethics Committee (VSAEC) before animals are used for scientific purposes in teaching, if activities have not been pre-approved.
- Do not use an animal in more than one scientific activity, either in the same or different projects, without approval from VSAEC.
- Maintain records of animal care and use for audit inspection by VSAEC.
- Take care to prevent the spread of disease with hygiene and minimal handling of animals.
- Seek written consent from the parents/carers and students to take animals home beyond completion of a teaching unit.
- Do not keep animal(s) at school if appropriate level of care and welfare cannot be provided.
- Ensure that students who suffer allergies or have religious/cultural beliefs prohibiting them from doing so, do not interact with the animal.

Note: If a student brings a sick, injured and orphaned animal to the school, a veterinary practitioner or the RSPCA should be contacted to handle the matter.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Prior to using animals in school teaching programs, teachers must familiarise themselves with the following legislations and guidelines:

- *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* and its regulations of 1997
- Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (7th Edition, 2004)
- Code of Practice for the Housing and Care of Laboratory Mice, Rats, Guinea Pigs and Rabbits
- *Wildlife Act 1975* and its regulations of 2002
- *Environment Protection Act 1970*, as amended
- Acts, guidelines and codes of practice relating to farm animals and wildlife available on the Department of Primary Industries

EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed by all Year Level Leaders every 4 years.