



Department of
Education

Use of Animals in Public Schools Policy

Effective date: 5 August 2014

Version: 2.5

Last update date: 24 July 2023

Table of contents

1. Policy statement	3
2. Policy rules	3
3. Responsibility for Implementation and Compliance	4
4. Scope	4
5. Supporting Procedures	4
6. Definitions	5
7. Related documents	6
8. Contact information	6
9. History of changes	7
10. More information	8
Policy review date	8
Policy last updated	8

1. Policy statement

The Department of Education requires all employees to adhere to consistent and high quality practices for the care and use of animals in schools.

2. Policy rules

When using animals for a scientific teaching activity principals and teachers must:

- adhere to the requirements of the [Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition](#);
- obtain prior written approval from the Schools Animal Ethics Committee;
- where an activity is pre-approved by the Schools Animal Ethics Committee, adhere to any guidelines or [Standard Operating Procedures](#) that apply to the activity to be conducted; and
- report on the use of the animals in the manner prescribed by the Schools Animal Ethics Committee.

When using animals for teaching activities other than science, at an agricultural college or school with a farm, principals and school staff must:

- promote and protect the welfare, safety and health of animals;
- undertake proper and humane care and management of all animals in accordance with generally accepted standards, guidelines and [Standard Operating Procedures](#) that apply;
- ensure that students also adhere to high quality practices for the care and use of animals;
- obtain prior approval from the Director, Agricultural Education for activities not generally accepted as routine management; and
- report on the use of animals in the manner prescribed by the Director, Agricultural Education.

For animals kept on school premises, where the circumstances are not included in the above policy rules (for example, classroom pets and chickens in vegetable gardens) principals will be responsible for the welfare of these animals.

Guidance

Animal welfare is managed in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2002.

This policy does not apply to:

- the use of living things not within the definition of animal, for example insects, spiders, worms, and snails; and
- the use of animals for dissections where those animals are obtained already euthanized from a licensed scientific supplier (such as the Animal Resource Centre).

Approval of an application for the use of animals for a scientific teaching activity can be granted for a period of up to three years.

Detailed information regarding the requirements and processes of the Schools Animal Ethics Committee are available on the [Animal Ethics website](#).

Agricultural colleges and schools with farms do not require approval from the Schools Animal Ethics Committee for routine management and care of animals or use of animals for teaching activities under the technologies curriculum. Should a school or agricultural college undertake a scientific activity using their farm animals they are required to seek approval for the activity from the Schools Animal Ethics Committee.

3. Responsibility for Implementation and Compliance

Principals are responsible for the implementation of the policy.

The Deputy Director General, Schools is responsible for compliance monitoring.

4. Scope

This policy applies to principals and school staff in public schools.

5. Supporting Procedures

[Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes in Public Schools Procedures](#)

[Routine Care and Management of Animals in Public School Farms Procedures](#)

6. Definitions

Animal

Any live non-human vertebrate (that is, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals encompassing domestic animals, purpose-bred animals, livestock, wildlife) and cephalopods

Scientific teaching activity

Any action or group of actions to impart or demonstrate knowledge or techniques to achieve an educational outcome in science, as specified in the relevant curriculum or competency requirement.

7. Related documents

Relevant legislation or authority

[Animal Welfare Act 2002 \(WA\)](#)

[Animal Welfare \(Scientific Purposes\) Regulations 2003 \(WA\)](#)

Other documents

[Animal Ethics System](#) (login required)

[Animal use and health records](#)

[Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition](#)

[Form A: Proposal for the use of animals on school farms for non-routine activities](#)

[Form B: Unexpected animal incident report \(staff only\)](#)

[Form C: Livestock report \(staff only\)](#)

[Unexpected adverse event report](#)

8. Contact information

Policy manager:

Director, Agricultural Education

Policy contact officer:

Consultant, Animals in Schools

T: (08) 9264 5202

E: agriculturaleducation.services@education.wa.edu.au

9. History of changes

Effective date	5 August 2014
Last update date Policy version no.	2.0
Notes	Animals in Schools policy reviewed and recast as Use of Animals in Schools Policy and Procedures. Endorsed by DG on 27 June 2014.
Effective date	5 August 2014
Last update date	2 August 2017
Policy version no.	2.1
Notes	Minor change to contact details D17/0045097.
Effective date	5 August 2014
Last update date	31 August 2018
Policy version no.	2.2
Notes	Minor changes to include reference to Public Schools D18/0151652, updated legislation links D18/0207680 and updates to reflect organisational changes D18/0388845.
Effective date	5 August 2014
Last update date	20 February 2020
Policy version no.	2.3
Notes	Minor changes to contact information D19/0473431
Effective date	5 August 2014
Last update date	7 September 2022
Policy version no.	2.4

Notes	Minor changes to contact information D22/0682617
Effective date	5 August 2014
Last update date	24 July 2023
Policy version no.	2.5
Notes	Minor changes to hyperlinks and forms D23/1340281

10. More information

Supporting content

Procedure

[Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes in Public Schools Procedures](#)

[Routine Care and Management of Animals in Public School Farms Procedures](#)

Policy review date

5 August 2017

Policy last updated

24 July 2023
