



Pets and Animals Policy

1. BACKGROUND

At Apollo Bay P-12 College, we believe that the inclusion of well cared for animals and pets into the curriculum has many benefits for students, however, this needs to be properly managed to ensure a safe, comfortable and secure environment for both our children and the animals involved.

2. PURPOSE & AIMS

- To provide our students with first hand experiences of caring for animals and pets, whilst at the same time, ensuring that the students realise and meet the obligations involved in caring for pets.
- To provide our students with a safe environment while pets are on the school grounds.
- To provide our students the opportunity to study the lives of animals through first-hand experience.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

Animals at Apollo Bay P-12 College will fall under the following categories:

- A. Classroom Pet
- B. Pet Visitor
- C. Teaching and Learning Animals (TLAs)

Considerations to make in advance:

Before any animal classroom Pet Visitor or acquisition of a Classroom Pet, the classroom teacher will investigate whether any student is:

- *allergic or sensitive to any particular species or their food or bedding materials*
- *immune compromised, and therefore more susceptible to zoological illnesses*

In the event where a student is either of the above- NO Pet Visitor or Classroom Pet will be permitted. Parents shall complete APPENDIX 2 as part of the College Enrolment Pack.

A. CLASSROOM PET

1. Any class wishing to incorporate a living animal or pet into their room must provide a written request and comprehensive plan to the Principal for approval by College Council, which demonstrates that the class has appropriately considered essential issues such as feeding, housing, costs, cleaning, vet care, school vacation periods etc..., prior to the introduction of any animal into the room.

Where approval has been granted by College Council for a "Classroom Pet", the following applies;

2. The primary educator in the classroom is considered the animal's "guardian and caregiver", and is responsible for ensuring that all of the animal's physical and psychological needs are met.

The animal's guardian is responsible for:

- 2.1 researching the animal's species and consulting reliable sources (e.g. veterinarian) regarding appropriate diet, housing, exercise, and socialization.
 - 2.2 ensuring that the animal is fed appropriately, handled properly, and that its habitat is cleaned regularly; using logs to track feedings and cleanings is recommended
 - 2.3 seeking regular and where required emergency veterinary care for the animal (including vaccinations) **and is responsible for all veterinary fees**
 - 2.4 taking the animal home during weekends, holidays, and vacations
 - 2.5 continuing to care for the animal at home in the event that a future student is allergic and the animal is unable to live in the classroom
3. The classroom teacher will provide parents and guardians with information about the classroom pet, the purpose of acquiring the animal, how its care will fit into the curriculum, and a plan for how any injuries (bites, scratches) will be managed should they arise. **Should any parent/guardian object to the inclusion of a Classroom Pet, the acquisition of the Pet will NOT proceed.**

B. PET VISITORS

1. Students and/or Staff who wish to bring their pets to visit the classroom must seek the correct approval from the College Principal and complete Appendix A "**Visiting Pet Approval Form**".

As per Classroom Pets, Visiting Pets will not be approved where any student in the classroom is;

- *allergic or sensitive to any particular species or their food or bedding materials*
- *immune compromised, and therefore more susceptible to zoological illnesses*

C. Teaching and Learning Animals (TLAs)

Directly from the DET Website:

Schools must:

- consider if they can replace, reduce or refine their use of animals in teaching
- 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
- 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
- not keep animal(s) at school if appropriate level of care and welfare cannot be provided.

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.

VSAEC – scope and approvals

VSAEC considers and approves activity applications from schools relating to the use of animals for scientific purposes in teaching. It meets five times a year. The Department's [Teaching with Animals](#) website provides advice and resources for schools including information relating to:

- when and how to apply to VSAEC for approval
- the decision making process when considering the use of animals
- prohibited, pre-approved and approval-required activities
- planning teaching activity guidance
- approval and reporting system
- frequently asked questions
- species notes.\

Note that the remit of VSAEC is limited to the use of animals for scientific purposes in teaching. VSAEC does not consider or provide advice on the use of animals in schools for other purposes.

Story/Therapy Dogs and school pets

School pets (such as chickens) or animals used for classroom and environmental enrichment (such as Story/Therapy Dogs) do not require approval from VSAEC. However, the primary concern of the school must be the welfare of these animals at all times, including the provision of care during weekends and school holidays (if applicable) and veterinary care when needed.

Related policies

- [Managing Biological Materials](#)

Related legislation and regulations

- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1986)
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations (2008)
- Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (8th Edition, 2013)
- Code of Practice for the Housing and Care of Laboratory Mice, Rats, Guinea Pigs and Rabbits
- Wildlife Act (1975) and Regulations (2013)

All schools in Victoria must follow an approval process to use live animals for teaching:

1. **Consider the ethical and welfare issues involved.**
Follow the 3R filter to see if your planned activity is justified. Review species notes for animal care. See: [Animal welfare](#)
2. **Ensure your school's Scientific Procedures Premises Licence is current.**
Or apply for a new licence if required. See: [Scientific procedures premises licence](#)

3. **If your planned activity is on the list of pre-approved activities, you must notify the Victorian Schools Animal Ethics Committee of your plans.**
If your planned activity is not pre-approved, you must submit a request to the committee and be approved first. See: [Get approval to teach with animals](#)
4. **After the activity, submit completion advice to the committee and maintain records.**
See: [Completion advice and record keeping](#)

The Victorian Schools Animal Ethics Committee


The Victorian Schools Animal Ethics Committee helps schools comply with the following legislation and codes:

- [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act \(1986\)](#)
- [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations \(2008\)](#)
- [Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition \(2013\)](#)
- [General school authorisation licence to keep wildlife](#)
- [Code of practice for the housing and care of laboratory mice, rats, guinea pigs and rabbits](#)

The Victorian Schools Animal Ethics Committee has been established to help all government, Catholic and independent Victorian schools comply with relevant legislation in the responsible care for animals used in teaching.

Complaints should be lodged with the committee if you have any concerns regarding the care, use or treatment of any animal on school property. The matter should be reported immediately. For more information and to register a complaint, see:  [complaints process \(doc - 172kb\)](#)

VSAEC is able to reject proposals for the use of animals in schools if the use of animals is not essential or justified and does not conform to the requirements of the code. This will take into consideration factors including ethics, the impact on the animal or animals and the anticipated educational value.

A grievance can be lodged if you do not agree with the decision of the VSAEC concerning the approval of any application that has been made. For more information and to register a grievance, see:  [Grievance Process \(doc - 164kb\)](#)

Get advice

For enquiries, email: animaethics@edumail.vic.gov.au

For approval and reporting system login enquiries phone the service desk on 1800 641 943.

Select option 4 (school technical support), option 4 (assistance with software), then option 3 (assistance with other software).

Apollo Bay P-12 College GENERAL Principles

- The school will not purchase animals, unless directly for Teaching and Learning Purposes.
- Classes that have Pet Visitors or Classroom Pets must have a well-known emergency procedure if the animal escapes so that children do not over-react and endanger the health of the pet involve.
- Guest speakers demonstrating good pet care practices will be welcomed to the school.
- Pets that die have a profound effect on some children. Therefore, the death of Classroom Pets will be managed in a caring manner. The death of a Classroom Pet will be discussed openly with students in a manner consistent with their age and understanding, as a natural part of the life cycle of all living things.

From 8.30am to 4.00pm

- ***Parents MUST NOT bring pets into the school grounds when dropping off and picking up children.***
- ***Parents walking dogs to and from school should remain 'outside' of the College Grounds and dogs must remain on a leash at all times. Where a parent who has walked a dog to school requires entry to the school grounds, the dog must be secured outside the college grounds in a location away from pedestrian travel.***

4. EVALUATION

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's ANNUAL review cycle.

DEFINITIONS: NA

REFERENCES:

DET School Policy and Advisory Guide- Animals in Schools

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/pages/animals.aspx>

DATE RATIFIED: 17 March 2015

DATE FOR REVIEW: 17 March 2016 **UPDATED** Term 3 2018 (28/08/18)

Tiffany Holt
Principal

Andrew Gardiner
College Council President



Visiting Pet Approval Form

For health and safety reasons, no Visiting Pet, or animal (in accordance with the College Pets and Animals Policy) shall be brought onto the premises of Apollo Bay P-12 College without the prior permission* (minimum 24 hours) of the Principal.

This includes animals in the playground, animals brought to school for 'show and tell' type specific purposes and animals brought to school for educational programs e.g. 'Responsible Pet Ownership'.

***The only exception to this rule is for working or training guide and seeing eye dogs.**

Apollo Bay P-12 College- Complete and Submit to the Principal

Students Name: _____

Homegroup: _____

I wish to bring my (type of animal) _____ to Apollo Bay P-12 College on (day/date and time) _____

Purpose for bringing the pet to school:

This animal has all relevant veterinarian checks/vaccinations and is registered/licensed as required. I declare my pet has never been aggressive towards or injured another person.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

CONTACT PHONE NO: _____

PRINCIPAL'S AUTHORISATION: _____

APPENDIX 2



Form
M

Permission to allow a Classroom Pet and/or Pet Visitors into my child's classroom.

At Apollo Bay P-12 College, we believe that the inclusion of well cared for animals and pets into the curriculum has many benefits for students, however, this needs to be properly managed to ensure the benefits for the children are complemented by a safe, comfortable and secure environment for the animals involved.

As per our College Pets and Animals Policy- In the event where a student is either of the below- NO Pet Visitor or Classroom Pet will be permitted

- *allergic or sensitive to any particular species or their food or bedding materials*
- *immune compromised, and therefore more susceptible to zoological illnesses*

.....

👤 YES- I give ongoing permission for a Classroom PET or PET Visitors in my child's classroom.

👤 NO- I do not give permission for a Classroom PET or PET Visitors in my child's classroom due to the following reason:

Student Name	
Signature Parent/Guardian	
Date	