

Non-Government Schools Animal Ethics Committee STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP No:	26
SOP	Observation of pets under the control of their owner - Show & Tell
Scientific Name:	Not Applicable
Category:	1 only
Approval Level:	For category 1 activities the school principal must approve the activity.
Authority:	Government Schools – Department for Education and Childhood Development Animal Ethics Committee Independent and Catholic Schools – Non-Government Schools Animal Ethics Committee (NGSAEC)
Authority Approval Date:	1 November 2013
Last updated:	3 July 2023
Disclaimer:	<i>This document may be updated at any time. You should check the web site regularly to ensure that you are meeting the most recent recommendations. If you note any concerns with the information provided (inadequate, incorrect) please contact the relevant AEC.</i>
Licensing Requirement:	Not applicable
Compliance Requirement:	Not applicable as the animals are not housed at the school.

BACKGROUND

Young children love to retell events and experiences and enjoy sharing what is dear and important to them. Often this will involve bringing a pet and or animal to school.

Given that people's relationship with animals is an important aspect of the human condition, schools should encourage and help students to build shared knowledge and understanding about them. Coupled with this is a responsibility for assisting students to develop a respect for animals and to understand the ethical issues involved in their care. Thus, students should be given opportunities in a school context to learn about the diversity and appropriateness of the range of relationships between animals and humans. Show and Tell (news) provides this opportunity.

Show and Tell also aids the development of children's oral language skills. The benefits of young children bringing pets to school, provides an opportunity for them to identify, describe and to communicate clearly. It also provides a focus, enabling the teacher to prompt and help the listeners to engage with the talking, and assisting listeners to formulate quality/relevant responses.

While there are obvious benefits for children bringing their pets and animals to school, the welfare of the animal is paramount and must be considered. Schools, if they allow animals to be brought to for Show and Tell, must provide conditions and management appropriate to the behavioural and physical needs of the animals. Bringing animals/pets to school remains at the discretion of the teacher, with approval of the principal, in conjunction with the child's parent or caregiver. Schools may well insist that the parent/caregiver be present and be responsible for the care and welfare of the animal and that the animal then be taken home. This is at the discretion of the teacher and principal, once again in liaison with the parent/caregiver.

CONSIDERATIONS

If a child wishes to bring their pet to school, students must first seek permission from their teacher before doing so. Depending on the species of animal, the teacher must use their own discretion in giving permission. The teacher should also check with their school's policy in this area and seek guidance from the principal if unsure about allowing a child to bring a pet to school.

Issues to be considered prior to the visit include:

- Do any of the children suffer from known allergies to or phobias about any type of animal?
- Is the parent of the child able to be present to help support their child and control the animal if needed and after the session, take the animal home? It should be made clear to the adult that the parent will be responsible for always supervising the pet while it is on school property.
- Is the animal dangerous (e.g. venomous snakes and spiders)? Some breeds of dogs will not be permitted in the classroom. Any concerns about the suitability of an animal for show and tell should be directed to the principal prior to approval being given.
- Students should be closely supervised for the duration of the activity. Consideration should be given to whether it is necessary to have additional adults supervising the Show And Tell activity. Ideally only one

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animal would be present on one day or at least in the classroom at a time. All doors and windows should be closed to prevent escape.

- Decide on the acceptable level of student interaction with the animal in consultation with the child's parent or caregiver. Interaction between pets and students should cease immediately if the pet shows signs of stress or harmful behaviour. All animals can have the ability to bite so teachers are encouraged to ensure that children do not overwhelm animals or make lots of noise.