



Animals in Queensland state schools procedure

Version: 5.2 | Version effective: 11/01/2022

Audience

All state schools

Purpose

This procedure outlines legal obligations, responsibilities and processes for the responsible care, use and protection of animals in schools.

Overview

Principals, staff and any other person in charge of an animal are obligated under the [Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 \(Qld\)](#) (the Act) to promote the responsible care and/or use of animals, and have a duty of care for those animals.

Under the [Biosecurity Act 2014 \(Qld\)](#), all reasonable and practical measures must be taken to prevent or minimise biosecurity risks, including those associated with animals. Schools that own or keep the threshold number of designated animals outlined in Chapter 7 of the *Biosecurity Act 2014* (Qld) must register as a [registrable biosecurity entity](#) (RBE) with Biosecurity Queensland.

Schools must also uphold the management principles of the [Nature Conservation Act 1992 \(Qld\)](#) regarding the protection of native wildlife and habitats.

The use of animals for scientific purposes is governed by the [Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th edition 2013 \(updated 2021\)](#) (the Code). The use must be essential to achieve the stated learning outcomes and the 3Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement) must be applied at all stages of the animal use and care. [Categories of animal use activities](#) aligning with the Code have been established by the [Queensland Schools Animal Ethics Committee \(QSAEC\)](#). Schools proposing the scientific use of animals under Category 2 or 3 must gain prior approval from QSAEC before conducting these activities.

There are also potential disease hazards and other occupational health and safety issues associated with the presence, care and use of animals. Risk management of animal activities ensures the health, safety and wellbeing of students, staff and others involved.

Where there are privately-owned livestock agisted on school property or school livestock agisted on non-school property, agreements must be developed in accordance with the [Agistment of livestock procedure](#).

Responsibilities and processes associated with the presence of assistance animals on school grounds are detailed in the [Assistance animals and support animals at school procedure](#).

Responsibilities

Principals

- Ensure that ethical behaviour and respect for animals and their wellbeing underpins all decisions and actions involved in animal activities.
- Ensure there is pedagogical justification for the use of animals.
- Establish school animal-management processes that align with the requirements of this procedure to safeguard and monitor animal welfare and wellbeing of animals on school grounds or animals used by the school on private property.
- Ensure all relevant persons are aware of and meet their obligations under legislation (animal care and protection, biosecurity, management of wildlife, native animal permits and licences, use of animals for scientific purposes).
- Ensure appropriate resources (human, facilities, financial, training) are available to meet animal welfare and wellbeing needs.
- Ensure that staff using animals have relevant knowledge, skills and/or experience and/or are supervised by suitably qualified mentors.
- Manage [health, safety and wellbeing](#) (DoE employees only) and [curriculum activity risks](#) associated with animal use.
- Ensure that a [school-based animal activity register](#) is maintained for audit purposes.
- Cooperate fully with audits of compliance with this procedure, the Act and the Code which may be undertaken by QSAEC members, the Department of Education (the department) and external reviewers contracted by the department, or by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF).

Staff

- Ensure that ethical behaviour and respect for animals and their wellbeing underpin all decisions and actions involved in animal activities.
- Comply with relevant [legislation](#), departmental procedures and school processes relating to an animal activity.
- Apply the 3Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement) when proposing the use of animals and animal parts.
- Provide pedagogical justification for the use of animals.
- Ensure that use of animals (living or dead) and animal parts is accountable, open, responsible and respectful.

- Ensure [health, safety and wellbeing](#) (DoE employees only) and [curriculum activity risks](#) associated with animal activities are identified and appropriate controls implemented.
- Ensure that students and others involved in animal use have relevant knowledge, skills and/or experience and/or are supervised by suitably qualified mentors.
- Ensure that practices and procedures involving animals are based on current best practice.
- Cooperate fully with audits of compliance with this procedure, the Act and the Code which may be undertaken by a QSAEC member(s), the department and external reviewers contracted by the department, or by DAF.

Process

For wildlife

1. Staff contact the Infrastructure Advisor in the department's regional office if advice is required on any wildlife issues affecting school operations.
2. Staff develop processes to respond appropriately to any wildlife incident, seeking guidance as deemed necessary from the local council, RSPCA or the [Department of Environment and Science](#) (DES).
3. Staff report:
 - wildlife emergencies relating to cassowaries and crocodiles, and incidents where a person has come into contact with bats to DES
 - all other wildlife emergencies (e.g. sick, injured or orphaned animals) to [RSPCA Queensland](#).
4. Staff ensure that relevant permits or licences are current before taking, keeping, using or moving wildlife as required by Queensland's native wildlife [licensing system](#).

For all animals other than wildlife

Use the [Categories of animal use activities](#) to determine whether approval is required from QSAEC for the proposed animal use.

When QSAEC approval is not required (i.e. Category 1 activities)

1. Principals decide whether all aspects of animal activities are ethical, justified and respectful of animals.
2. Staff ensure relevant permits and licences are current.
3. Staff implement controls to address [workplace health and safety](#) (DoE employees only) and [curriculum activity risks](#) associated with animal activities, taking into account:
 - [zoonoses](#) associated with the specific animal species
 - [infection controls](#) and [animal contact guidelines to reduce risks to human health](#)
 - facility and equipment checks
 - storage of medicines and chemicals
 - supervision and monitoring (both in and out of school hours)
 - emergency planning to address staff/student/animal illness, injury or distress

- disposal of animal waste.
4. Schools allocate appropriate resources to ensure animal welfare needs – appropriate to the species, environment and circumstances – can be met. Refer to [Animal information](#) for a range of animal husbandry and care topics.
 5. Staff ensure animals have:
 - ready access to fresh water and an appropriate diet
 - suitable environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area, whether outdoors or indoors, and security from predators
 - sufficient space, proper facilities and the company of the animal's own kind (as appropriate) that support the animal to display normal patterns of behaviour
 - ongoing supervision and monitoring to provide rapid diagnosis and treatment of disease or injury
 - appropriate handling and conditions that minimise harm, including pain and distress (e.g. anxiety, boredom).

When QSAEC approval is required before the activity can occur (i.e. Category 2 and 3 activities)

Application process

1. Schools determine who will be the activity leader for a proposed animal activity.
2. Activity leaders follow steps 1-5 of the [Animal ethics approval process](#) to:
 - determine whether the proposed curriculum outcomes can be achieved without animal use
 - minimise the number of animals required to achieve the curriculum outcomes
 - refine techniques in the proposed activity to reduce the impact on animals
 - provide, in curriculum planning, pedagogical justification for the animal use
 - complete a QSAEC application for approval to conduct the activity.
3. In consultation with the activity leader, principals approve submission of the QSAEC application provided that:
 - all aspects of the proposed animal activity are ethical, pedagogically justified and demonstrate the governing principles of the Code
 - staff have relevant knowledge, skills and/or experience to deliver the activity, meeting duty of care obligations
 - appropriate resources (human, facilities, financial, training) are available to meet animal welfare and wellbeing needs.
4. Activity leaders submit application to QSAEC and file application in the school-based animal activity register.
5. Activity leaders file the QSAEC approval, once received, in the school's animal-use register.

Conducting a QSAEC approved animal-use activity

1. Activity leaders inform relevant staff of the conditions of the approval (e.g. husbandry requirements, activities permitted, reporting requirements) and of staff responsibilities under the [Responsibilities of school personnel under the Code](#).

2. Activity leaders ensure relevant permits and licences are current.
3. Staff implement controls to address [workplace health and safety](#) (DoE employees only) and [curriculum activity risks](#) associated with animal activities, taking into account:
 - [zoonoses](#) associated with the specific animal species
 - [infection controls](#) and [animal contact guidelines to reduce risks to human health](#)
 - facility and equipment checks
 - storage of medicines and chemicals
 - supervision and monitoring (both in and out of school hours)
 - emergency planning to address staff/student/animal illness, injury or distress
 - disposal of animal waste.
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 - ready access to fresh water and an appropriate diet
 - suitable environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area, whether outdoors or indoors, and security from predators
 - sufficient space, proper facilities and the company of the animal's own kind (as appropriate) that support the animal to display normal patterns of behaviour
 - ongoing supervision and monitoring to provide rapid diagnosis and treatment of disease or injury
 - appropriate handling and conditions that minimise harm, including pain and distress (e.g. anxiety, boredom).
6. Staff ensure that [RBE](#) and [livestock identification](#) requirements are satisfied as relevant.
7. Principals ensure that agreements in accordance with the [Agistment of livestock procedure](#) are in place, if relevant.
8. Staff provide students who raise genuine ethical, religious or cultural concerns and objections to an animal activity with an alternate activity to be completed to a comparable standard as the animal-use activity.
9. Activity leaders seek approval from QSAEC for all [modifications](#) to the conditions of an approved activity, before implementing those modifications.
10. Staff ensure that, at all times during animal-use activities, students are supervised by a person competent in the activity and who takes into account the competencies and responsibilities of each student.
11. Should an event occur that has, or has the potential for, a negative impact on animal welfare, activity leaders:
 - take prompt action to alleviate animal pain and distress and to prevent a recurrence of the adverse event
 - submit an [Unexpected adverse event report](#) to QSAEC (via the principal) within 7 days of the event.
12. Should a complaint relating to an animal activity be received, activity leaders:
 - investigate and take prompt corrective action as necessary

- submit an [Animal use complaint report](#) to QSAEC (via the principal) within 7 days of receipt of the complaint.
13. Activity leaders submit annual [activity completion reports](#) for all approved activities in Term 4 each year and/or at the termination of an approved application.
14. Schools maintain the school-based animal activity register.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Activities	Any action or group of actions undertaken that involves the care and use of animals, including acquisition, transport, breeding, housing and husbandry of those animals. An activity may involve one or more procedures.
Activity leader	The appointed teacher or authorised teacher representative who is conducting the animal use activity and is responsible for the wellbeing of an animal throughout the period of use of the animal in an approved activity, until provisions are made for the animal at the conclusion of the use. Responsibilities of this role are outlined in Responsibilities of school personnel under the Code .
Animals	For the purpose of this procedure, animals are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any live non-human vertebrates including live pre-natal or pre-hatched vertebrates in the last half of gestation or development • cephalopods e.g. octopi and squid (at any stage of the life cycle) • malacostracans e.g. crabs, crayfish, lobsters, prawns (at any stage of the life cycle). Please note that malacostracans do not require approval for scientific use under the Code.
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	An assistance animal is a dog or other animal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accredited under a law of a State or Territory that provides for the accreditation of animals trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability; or • accredited by an animal training organisation prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this paragraph; or • trained: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability; and

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to meet standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.
Current best practice	<p>A practice, procedure, method or process that has proven to be most effective in supporting and safeguarding animal wellbeing, and that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • takes into consideration the relevant aspects of species-specific biology, physiology and behaviour • is based on the best available scientific evidence (or, in the absence of scientific evidence, accepted practice) • includes strategies to minimise adverse impacts.
Ethical	Evaluated as acceptable, taking into consideration what is good or bad, right or wrong.
Facility	Any place where animals are kept, held or housed, including yards, paddocks, tanks, ponds, buildings, cages, pens and containers.
Governing principles	<p>Respect for animals must underpin all decisions and actions involving the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. This respect is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using animals only when it is justified • supporting the wellbeing of the animals involved • avoiding or minimising harm, including pain and distress, to those animals • applying high standards of scientific integrity • applying Replacement, Reduction and Refinement (the 3Rs) at all stages of animal care and use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the Replacement of animals with other methods ○ the Reduction in the number of animals used ○ the Refinement of techniques used to minimise the adverse impact on animals • knowing and accepting one's responsibilities.
Legal obligation	Responsibilities held under relevant law (e.g. <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> (Qld), <i>Animal Care and Protection Regulation 2012</i> (Qld), <i>Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th Edition 2013</i> (Cwlth)).
Livestock	Animals used in agriculture and aquaculture.
Others	Volunteers, parents, visiting activity leaders and any school staff involved in planning, delivering or supervising any animal use in schools.

Term	Definition
Person in charge of an animal	<p>A person is a person in charge of an animal if the person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • owns or has a lease, licence or other proprietary interest in the animal; or • has the custody of the animal; or • is employing or has engaged someone else who has the custody of the animal and the custody is within the scope of the employment or engagement.
Scientific purposes	<p>For the purposes of this procedure, scientific purposes include all activities conducted with the aim of acquiring, developing or demonstrating knowledge or techniques in all areas of science including teaching, field trials, environmental or agricultural studies, research, diagnosis, product testing and the production of biological products.</p>
School-based animal activity register	<p>A register containing hard copy records, retained for 7 years for audit purposes, including, as relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QSAEC applications, approvals, modifications to approval, unexpected adverse event reports, complaints, annual completion reporting • qualifications of staff involved in animal activities • licences and permits • acquisition and animal identification records • activities conducted • feeding logs (times/amount) • health treatments and records • supervision and monitoring processes and schedules • emergency management processes • disposal details and dates.
The 3Rs (Reduction, Refinement, Replacement)	<p>The 3Rs refer to the principles of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • replacement of animals with other methods • reduction in the number of animals used • refinement of techniques used to minimise the adverse impact on animals.
Wellbeing	<p>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 by the animal's capacity to cope with stressors.</p>
Wildlife	<p>Free-living animals of native or introduced species, including those that are captive bred and those captured from free-living populations.</p>

Legislation

- [Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Animal Care and Protection Regulation 2012 \(Qld\)](#) Part 2
- [Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition, 2013 \(updated 2021\) \(Cwlth\)](#)
- [Biosecurity Act 2014 \(Qld\)](#) Chapter 2,7
- [Biosecurity Regulation 2016 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Nature Conservation Act 1992 \(Qld\)](#) Part 1

Delegations/Authorisations

- Nil

Policies and procedures in this group

- Nil

Supporting information for this procedure

- Nil

Other resources

- [Assistance animals and support animals at school procedure](#)
- [Agistment of livestock procedure](#)
- [Infection control procedure](#)
- [Managing risks in school curriculum activities procedure](#)
- [Animal contact guidelines – reducing the risk to human health 2014](#) (Department of Health)
- [Activity completion report](#) (QSAEC)
- [Animal ethics approval process](#)
- [Animal welfare and ethics](#) (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries)
- [Animal use complaint report](#) (QSAEC)
- [Animals in education](#)
- [Australian & New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching](#)
- [Modification, SOP variation or amendment form](#) (QSAEC)
- [National Livestock Identification System](#)
- [Permits, licences and authorities](#)

- [Preventing zoonoses](#)
- [Registerable Biosecurity Entity](#)
- [Responsibilities of School Personnel under the Code](#) (QSAEC)
- [RSPCA Queensland](#)
- [Unexpected adverse event report](#) (QSAEC)
- [Using animals in science](#)

Contact

For general information on animals in schools, please contact your [closest regional office](#).

For specific information about the Queensland Schools Animal Ethics Committee and scientific animal use, please contact the State Schools Division by email animal.ethics@qed.qld.gov.au.

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11/01/2021

Superseded versions

Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.

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