Te Whānau o Ōtūmatua School Board

Animals Policy

Purpose

This policy ensures that Te Whānau o Ōtūmatua can create safe, meaningful and beneficial opportunities for our akonga and community to engage with animals onsite.

1. Guidelines

The kura recognises that animal ownership has many benefits including stress reduction, promotion of social interactions, encouraging exercise and play, satisfying a need to touch, expression of mutual affection, opportunities to learn and practise empathy.

While there are practical barriers against pet ownership at OTM, ākonga are given opportunities to experience some of the benefits that come with interacting with pets owned by kaiako.

(See Business as Usual Guidelines – Animals in Our Care, Animals Risk Assessment, Animals Care Checklists on Filestore -> Forms)

1.1. Kaiako

1.1.1. Kaiako are welcome to bring their pets to the kura for day visits.
1.1.2. Pet owners obtain clearance, either via email or in person, from the duty manager.
1.1.3. The duty manager ensures that there are no more than two pets onsite at any one time.
1.1.4. In requesting clearance, the pet owners should identify the: type of pet, benefit to ākonga, and date and time of the visit.
1.1.5. Visits may be one-off or occur with regular frequency over a term.
1.1.6. Pet owners who have clearance for regular visits over a term should renew this clearance at the beginning of each term.

1.2. Precautions – safety and risks

1.2.1. Pet owners who opt to bring their pets to the kura do so at their own risk.
1.2.2. Ākonga and pets are not to be left unsupervised at any time.
1.2.3. Pet owners who opt to bring their pets to the kura are expected to:
- Ensure the animal is gentle and has a proven ability to adapt to a range of people.
- Ensure animals have up to date vaccinations.
- Ensure that the animal has been regularly treated for internal and external parasites e.g., wormed and defleaed/loused, as advised by the animal health industry.
- Take responsibility for the pet at all times and remain alert to any danger that may arise.
- Take a proactive role in teaching ākonga how to interact with the pet e.g., grooming, exercising, stroking and playing with the pet.
- Clean up and dispose of all animal waste to avoid contaminating the playing field, or the garden areas.
- Ensure ākonga wash their hands after handling pets.

1.2.4. The duty manager has the right to withhold clearance where safety and risk precautions have not been followed on previous visits.

2. Compliance

Te Whānau o Ōtūmatua will ensure that all animal-related activities comply with relevant legislation, Ministry of Education expectations, and the kura health, safety, and wellbeing obligations, including:

- The **Health and Safety at Work Act 2015** and associated regulations.
- The kura Health and Safety Policy and procedures.
- Animal welfare requirements under the **Animal Welfare Act 1999**.

- Relevant public health, hygiene, and biosecurity requirements.
- Any conditions imposed by the tumuaki or delegated duty manager regarding animal visits.
- The tumuaki or duty manager reserves the right to decline, modify, or cease any animal visit or activity where there is a concern regarding safety, wellbeing, animal welfare, or compliance requirements.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

School Board

The Board will:

- Ensure appropriate policy and governance oversight regarding animals on kura grounds.
- Monitor compliance with this policy through the regular policy review process.
- Ensure the kura has suitable health and safety systems to manage risks associated with animals.

Tumuaki

The Tumuaki will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented and communicated to kaiako
- Support safe and appropriate animal-related activities
- Delegate approval authority where appropriate
- Take action where concerns arise regarding animal welfare, safety, or compliance
- Ongoingly review safety and appropriateness of any animals that live on site

Duty Manager

The Duty Manager will:

- Consider and approve or decline requests to bring animals onto kura grounds.
- Ensure risks have been assessed and managed before approval is granted.
- Monitor compliance with approved visiting arrangements.
- Withdraw permission where safety expectations are not met.
- Take action where concerns arise regarding animal welfare, safety, or compliance.

Kaiako

Kaiako members will:

- Comply with all requirements of this policy.
- Actively feedback on animal's health, welfare, and suitability for interaction with ākonga.
- Supervise all interactions between ākonga and animals.
- Report any incidents, injuries, near misses, or concerns to the tumuaki or Duty Manager.

Ākonga

Ākonga will:

- Follow kaiako instructions when interacting with animals.
- Treat animals respectfully and appropriately.
- Immediately report any injury, illness, or concern involving an animal to a kaiako member.

4. Safety

Ākonga, kaiako, visitor, and animal safety is the priority in all animal-related activities. To ensure a safe environment:

4.1. An Animal Risk Assessment must be undertaken before any animal visit is approved.

4.2. Animals displaying aggressive, unpredictable, fearful, or unsafe behaviour must be removed immediately.

4.3. Appropriate consideration must be given to:
- allergies;
- asthma;
- phobias or fears;
- cultural considerations;
- ākonga behavioural needs;
- accessibility requirements.

4.4. Animals must remain under the effective control of their owner at all times.

4.5. Ākonga must be instructed in safe and respectful behaviour before interacting with an animal.

4.6. Handwashing facilities or sanitiser must be available following animal interactions.

4.7. Animal access may be restricted from food preparation, eating, or sensitive learning areas where appropriate.

4.8. Any injury, bite, scratch, illness, near miss, or safety concern involving an animal must be reported and managed in accordance with the kura incident reporting procedures.

4.9. The welfare of the animal must be considered at all times, including access to water, shade, rest, and protection from stress or excessive handling.

5. Documentation for Animals in Our Care

5.1. Documentation and records for all animals in our care are maintained and available for reference when required, including relevant health, ownership, behavioural, and care information.

6. Review Schedule

This policy will be reviewed according to the Board's Review Schedule or earlier if required due to legislative change or identified need.

Prepared by: Commissioner
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