ANIMALS IN SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

To ensure the compliance with the obligations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2000 and Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, 2001, when animals are brought to the school for activities such as show and tell, Mt St Patrick Primary will ensure that the following policy and procedures are adhered to.

Policy
The school support a culture where animals are allowed to be brought into the school under supervision. This can occur for educational and/or social activities, if the guidelines outlined in this document are followed.

Planning
• Complete a risk assessment for the activity (appendix a);
• Notify parents in writing of the impending visit and ask for reply in writing specifically about possible allergies to the specific animals. Staff and students should be warned of potential allergic reactions and how to detect it if someone is having such a reaction;
• Ensure cats and dogs have been inspected for the presence of fleas and ringworm;
• Arrange with parents pets are washed and treated for parasites;
• Liaise with appropriate adult and ensure only quiet pets are brought to school; large pets (eg horses) will not be allowed unless it can be arranged in an environment where there can be a barrier between animal and child and the physical contact can be closely monitored
• Arrange for pets to leave the premises after the interaction session is finished.

Actions during visit
• Closely monitor children for ones that are anxious about the animal contact;
• Monitor the contact of children who are at risk with allergies;
• Ensure good supervision levels at all times;
• Monitor children for behaviour that could lead to the animals becoming excited and lead to more unforeseen actions such as biting and scratching;
• Ensure the children do not touch the animals while eating;
• Ensure they do not put their hands in their mouth after touching the animals;
• Ensure they wash their hands thoroughly after the visit and before commencing other activities;
• If the animals urinate or defecate while on the visit, ensure that the area is thoroughly cleaned with some disinfectant;

Petting farms
If mobile petting farms are being brought to the school or visited as part of an excursion,
• Staff need to check the background of the farm and that the animals are regularly inspected for disease and parasites;
• Follow the same principles outlined above.

Stray Animals in the school
• Children should be instructed not to touch or encourage stray animals.
• Children should be instructed to report sightings of stray animals
• Once a stray has been detected, the school must take appropriate steps to have it removed from the grounds (e.g. ring the Council or Wildlife authorities)
APPENDIX A
Risk Assessment for Animals in School.

Teacher in
Charge
Class
Date of visit
Venue

What kind of animals will be included

Names of Supervisors

What problems can occur. Proposed control actions

Comments

Signed  Designation  Date