



National Animal Welfare Policy

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Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

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Animal Welfare Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is the national umbrella organisation for over 50 local SPCAs throughout the country which care for lost, neglected and abandoned animals. The SPCA is an approved organisation under the Animal Welfare Act 1999, and currently there are over 100 appointed SPCA inspectors and auxiliary officers working in the field. The SPCA is New Zealand's foremost animal welfare charity, representing a wide cross-section of the community, and with over 200,000 members and supporters nationwide.

The Royal New Zealand SPCA national council formulates and reviews policy relating to animal welfare on an ongoing basis. Policy may also be reviewed, and new policy introduced, by remit at national conference.

1.2 Philosophy

The SPCA has, as its basis, the philosophy that all animals are equally deserving of our *compassionate consideration*, whether they be a dog left tied up and neglected in a backyard or a possum chewing through our native forests.

1.3 Mission

The SPCA's mission is to advance the welfare of all animals in New Zealand by:

- preventing cruelty to animals
- alleviating suffering of animals
- promoting our policies through education and advocacy.

1.4 Policy Areas

Policies have been formulated covering the following areas:

- companion animals
- animals in science
- agricultural animals
- wildlife and the environment
- animals in entertainment
- blood sports
- animals in education.

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2. COMPANION ANIMALS

2.1 Responsible ownership

The SPCA discourages the keeping of companion animals by those who do not have the facilities, time, financial means, level of knowledge or interest necessary to ensure the well-being of the animals for which they are responsible.

Owning and caring for a companion animal is a commitment for the entire life of the animal. Companion animals require appropriate food, water, shelter and exercise; regular vaccination, worming and defleaing, and veterinary care as necessary; environmental enrichment, including regular contact with humans; adequate arrangements made for their care while the owner is away; and identification by microchipping, tattooing or an identification disc.

2.2 Population control

The SPCA advocates the desexing of domestic cats and dogs (and most companion animal mammals) unless there are overriding veterinary reasons not to do so.

The SPCA advocates that all companion animals rehomed from animal shelters or local authority pounds should be desexed.

The current overpopulation of cats and dogs will only be brought under control if society takes a more responsible approach in having companion animals desexed. Veterinarians are encouraged to perform desexing operations at an early age, particularly with regard to kittens and puppies rehomed from animal shelters.

2.3 Euthanasia

The SPCA is opposed to the euthanasia of fit and healthy companion animals, but accepts that euthanasia is at times unavoidable due to overpopulation of a species or in the interests of an individual animal.

Euthanasia may be considered in those situations where unowned animals are severely injured, diseased or wild, or where there is little prospect of the animal being rehomed.

2.4 Dog control

The SPCA advocates the registration of all dogs.

The SPCA advocates that all local authorities have a "selected owner" policy.

The SPCA advocates the microchipping of all dogs.

The SPCA would like to see a greater percentage of dogs registered, with all local authorities actively promoting "selected owner" policies. Dogs should be rehomed from pounds only to persons prepared to accept responsible ownership. The SPCA would prefer to see an owner licensing system introduced which incorporates owner education. All dogs should be microchipped to ensure lifetime identification.

2.5 Surgical mutilations

The SPCA is opposed to the surgical mutilation of companion animals for cosmetic (non-veterinary) purposes.

Animals should not be surgically mutilated unless there are good veterinary grounds on which to do so. In particular, the docking of dogs' tails or cropping of their ears, the debarking of dogs, the declawing of cats and the nicking of horses should not be carried out. This does not apply to desexing and, in some cases, the removal of dewclaws from dogs.

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2. COMPANION ANIMALS – continued

2.6 Selective breeding

The SPCA is opposed to the selective breeding of companion animals which produces adverse effects on their health or quality of life.

Selective breeding often causes changes in bodily form and/or function which are detrimental to the animal's well-being. The practice of breeding in close lineage may lead to unacceptable health and welfare problems.

2.7 Stray/unowned cats

The SPCA advocates that all local authorities have in place, fund and enforce reasonable cat management bylaws to control stray and unowned cats.

Where the support of the landowner/tenant/manager can be obtained and ongoing resources allow it, stray/unowned cats should be identified and assessed as to their health and welfare needs. Sole stray cats or cats in colonies may be desexed and returned to their colony under the responsibility of a recognised caregiver.

Where stray/unowned cats cannot be managed, a controlled trapping programme should be commenced, taking care not to trap domestic/owned animals. Trapped cats should be checked for evidence of identification and either returned to their owner, or evaluated for desexing and rehoming or humane euthanasia.

2.8 Pet shops

The SPCA advocates the compulsory regulation of pet shops.

Animals should be sold from pet shops only to persons prepared to accept responsible ownership. Pet shops should be regularly inspected and independently audited against established national standards.

2.9 Boarding kennels and catteries

The SPCA advocates the compulsory regulation of boarding establishments for cats and dogs.

Boarding kennels and catteries should be regularly inspected and independently audited against established national standards.

2.10 Dangerous dogs

The SPCA believes that provisions in the Dog Control Act 1996 and the Animal Welfare Act 1999 are adequate for the control of dangerous dogs by local authorities.

The SPCA is deeply concerned at the number of people, particularly children, who are bitten and/or attacked by dogs. Small children are often left alone with dogs, when they should always be supervised. The SPCA does not believe that banning any particular breed of dog will effectively reduce the number of attacks and bites, but would prefer to see owners accepting full responsibility for their dogs and increased education of owners in dog handling and control, and also of the public in how to safely approach dogs.

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2. COMPANION ANIMALS – continued

2.11 Training aids for dogs

The SPCA is opposed to the use of electric dog collars (both bark-activated and remote-controlled) by the general public.

The SPCA is opposed to the use of citronella bark collars.

Electric dog collars should only be used under the guidance of animal behaviour professionals, as a last resort. These collars can easily be misused by the general public looking for a quick solution to a problem, more often than not, related to a barren living environment with little or no social interaction. There are usually better ways of training a dog and/or modifying bad habits by analysing the underlying causes of the problem.

The SPCA believes that citronella collars may be much harsher than originally thought, due to a dog's keen sense of smell. Until evidence is provided demonstrating that these collars are not severe, the SPCA does not condone their use.

2.12 Caged Birds

The SPCA is opposed to the keeping of birds in cages which restrict their capacity for controlled flight.

The SPCA believes that, if birds are to be held captive, they should be kept in aviaries which allow the birds unlimited opportunity for controlled flight. The SPCA finds the practice of keeping birds in small cages unacceptable, unless the birds are provided with regular controlled flight periods out of the cage.

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3. ANIMALS IN SCIENCE

(animal manipulation, genetic modification and cloning)

3.1 Pain, suffering and distress

The SPCA is opposed to any manipulation which subjects animals to pain, suffering and distress.

It is important that, while animals continue to be used, every possible effort be made to prevent suffering. Anaesthesia or other forms of analgesia alone cannot be considered satisfactory solutions to the problem. These are inappropriate, for example, to alleviate the problems of fear, hunger and other forms of distress. The complex question of the prevention of pain, the relief of suffering and the reduction of distress must be kept under constant review by those responsible for authorising and carrying out manipulations under New Zealand legislation. The SPCA is concerned that laboratory animals often live in confined and barren conditions, and urges that animals be provided with enriched environments allowing them to express natural behaviours. The SPCA is opposed to the use of animals in the testing of inessential substances, such as beauty preparations, some household products and food additives.

3.2 Replacement, reduction and refinement

The SPCA supports the development of techniques that will result in the replacement, reduction or refinement of animal manipulations, the concept of the “3 Rs”.

The SPCA advocates greater effort being made by the scientific community in developing the use of non-animal and humane alternative techniques.

The SPCA regards as an advance any technique that will completely replace the use of animals, reduce the numbers used, or reduce suffering or otherwise improve laboratory animal welfare. However, this does not compromise the SPCA’s long-term aim of completely replacing animals in laboratories with alternative techniques.

Examples of replacement techniques include cell, tissue and organ cultures, the use of human volunteers, the use of epidemiological surveys in human medicine, the use of inanimate models, the use of films and videos in teaching and more extensive computer analysis. More could be done to develop replacements for animals, and such work merits greater government support.

3.3 Animal ethics committees

The SPCA supports the principle of animal ethics committees as outlined in Part 6 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 to monitor the use of animals in science.

The SPCA notes that animal welfare representatives nominated by the Society to serve on animal ethics committees work to improve the welfare of animals being manipulated. Decisions made by animal ethics committees, however, are not in any way attributable to or necessarily supported by the Society. The SPCA advocates as much support as possible being given to animal welfare representatives serving on animal ethics committees.

3.4 Pound/shelter animals

The SPCA is opposed to the supply of animals from pounds or shelters for manipulation purposes.

The SPCA believes that the supply of any animals for manipulation purposes from pounds or animal shelters fails to encourage the scientific community to find humane alternatives.

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Animal Welfare Policy

3. ANIMALS IN SCIENCE – continued

(animal manipulation, genetic modification and cloning)

3.5 Genetic engineering

The SPCA is opposed to manipulating the genetic constitution of animals where the outcome may result in adverse effects to the welfare of the animal.

It is recognised that research into genetically modified animals and other organisms has been going on for many years and appears likely to increase in the foreseeable future.

There may be some applications of genetic engineering which could have a positive benefit for animals.

Genetic engineering is a rapidly advancing subject and the SPCA will keep a watching brief on developments.

3.6 Cloning

The SPCA is opposed to cloning where such practice could establish abnormal and adverse traits which may affect the quality of life of an animal.

Cloning is present in natural reproduction (identical twins), but cloning by nuclear transfer cell division is still in its infancy and requires improvements in outcome in many species. When any traits which are known to compromise animal welfare are determined, such manipulation should be discontinued and appropriate measures taken.

There may be positive benefits accruing from cloning in that it could statistically produce more animals with desirable traits such as natural immunity to infections, and may have a role to play in assisting threatened species.

The SPCA will keep a watching brief on this rapidly developing technology.

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4. AGRICULTURAL ANIMALS

4.1 Production systems

The SPCA is opposed to all forms of farming which cause suffering or deprive animals of the opportunity to display their natural behaviour.

The SPCA believes that "factory farming", where animals are intensively farmed and are deprived of the opportunity to display natural behaviour patterns and given very limited space in which to live, is totally unacceptable. These deprivations are present in battery cages, broiler sheds, sow stalls and other similar confinement systems.

4.2 Mutilations

The SPCA is opposed to the unnecessary mutilation of farm animals.

In keeping with modern farm practice, the desexing of piglets, lambs and calves should not be undertaken if the animals are to be slaughtered before they reach sexual maturity. Dairy cows should not have their tails docked.

4.3 Export of live animals for slaughter

The SPCA is opposed to the export of live animals for slaughter.

The SPCA believes that no animal should be exported for slaughter overseas. Any sea voyage is an unnatural environment for the animals, the vessel may encounter bad weather, there is little or no opportunity to provide assistance should there be a welfare crisis during the voyage, and slaughter methods in destination countries are often inhumane in comparison with New Zealand slaughter methods.

4.4 Transport of animals

The SPCA is opposed to any form of transportation of farm animals which causes pain, suffering and distress.

The SPCA advocates that every effort be made to ensure the well-being of animals during transportation. Accommodation should be such as to minimise stress. The SPCA supports the establishment of a formal certification procedure for drivers of vehicles involved in long-distance road transportation of animals. Such certification should be based on the possession by drivers of adequate knowledge of the needs of the animals in their care. Drivers should also have the knowledge and equipment necessary to carry out humane slaughter in an emergency.

4.5 Transport of animals to slaughter

The SPCA advocates the slaughter of animals as close as possible to the point of production.

Stock should be unloaded promptly on arrival at the slaughter facility, and should not be left in the transporter as a form of holding yard.

4.6 Slaughter of animals

The SPCA is opposed to the slaughter of animals without prior stunning.

The SPCA advocates the stunning of animals prior to slaughter. The method used must be capable of rendering the animal insensible to pain until the animal is dead. The SPCA does not support any exception to this policy on religious grounds.

For on-farm or home killing, this can be achieved by shooting before severing the carotid arteries, this method being imperative for cattle (including calves) and pigs, and preferable for sheep. It is extremely important that the operator knows the correct points to shoot each species of animal, with either a suitably powered firearm or a captive bolt pistol.

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4. AGRICULTURAL ANIMALS – continued

4.7 Sheep washing

The SPCA is opposed to any procedure for the washing of sheep in slaughter facilities that causes suffering or distress to the sheep.

The SPCA encourages the development of less stressful methods of cleaning sheep prior to slaughter, as swim washing and belly sprays are known to be very stressful.

4.8 Slaughter facility stoppages

The SPCA condemns any industrial stoppage at a slaughter facility which results in the suffering of animals awaiting slaughter.

The SPCA advocates that all parties agree to the slaughter of all stock held in slaughter facilities or en route before any strike or lockout takes effect.

4.9 Seriously injured or diseased animals

The SPCA advocates that farm animals which must be killed due to serious injury or disease should be humanely killed on site without delay.

The SPCA advocates that animals seriously injured or diseased must be shot without delay by a person competent in the use of firearms, or killed by some other humane method. Such animals should not be moved and should be killed “where they lie”, whenever it is safe to do so.

4.10 Shade and shelter

The SPCA advocates the provision of adequate shade and shelter for farm animals, suited to the relevant species and to the expected weather in the particular location.

The practice of winter shearing (pre-lambing shearing) should only be undertaken when consideration has been given to the immediately expected weather, and adequate shelter (whether natural or in the form of covers or housing) is assured. Husbandry techniques must be of the highest standard to ensure the well-being of the shorn animals.

The SPCA notes that most species require shelter from the wind, and many species require shade as shelter from the sun.

4.11 Tethered animals

The SPCA is opposed to the long-term tethering of any farm animal.

Any animal which normally roves and grazes is unable to display its natural behaviour if it is tethered for long periods of time. Every effort should therefore be made to use securely fenced areas instead. The SPCA believes that animals should only be tethered for short periods of time during which their welfare is closely monitored. Animals that are tethered should be checked at least daily and have access to food, water and shelter. Appropriate collars, swivels and tethers of adequate length and thickness suitable for the relevant species should be used.

4.12 Deer farming

All animal husbandry operations performed in deer farming involving surgical procedures should be performed under veterinary supervision.

Develvetting should only be undertaken using the high-dose ring block local anaesthetic technique.

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4. AGRICULTURAL ANIMALS – continued

4.13 Fur farming

The SPCA is opposed to the breeding and keeping of animals for the sole purpose of raising pelts for the fur trade.

The raising of any animal purely for its pelt is unnecessary. Animals farmed for their pelts are often confined in unacceptably small cages.

4.14 Bull serving capacity testing

The SPCA is opposed to the use of the Blockey Test and similar tests to indicate the serving capacity of bulls.

Such tests are unacceptable as they totally disregard the welfare of the cows or heifers used.

4.15 Electroimmobilisation

The SPCA is opposed to electroimmobilisation as a form of restraint.

It is clear that electroimmobilisation devices are at best moderately physically stressful to animals, and at worst highly stressful with the potential to cause the death of the animal. Animals which have experienced electroimmobilisation are psychologically stressed by the procedure and averse to it. The SPCA believes that electroimmobilisation devices provide potential for abuse, intentionally or unintentionally, by operators.

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5. WILDLIFE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

5.1 Wild animals

The SPCA advocates that, where wild animals are to be killed or captured, this should be carried out by qualified and/or experienced operators, with minimal infliction of pain, suffering and distress.

The SPCA acknowledges that there is a need to control the populations of many pest and wild animals, but any measures taken must cause minimal pain, suffering and distress. Only suitably trained and qualified operators should perform this work. Research into more humane methods of control for pest and wild animals is encouraged.

5.2 Traps and snares

The SPCA is opposed to the use of all traps and snares which cause pain, suffering and distress.

If trapping is to be undertaken, only traps and snares which cause minimal pain, suffering and distress should be used.

5.3 Poisons

The SPCA is opposed to the use of any poison which causes pain, suffering and distress.

If poisons are to be used, only those poisons known to act quickly and cause minimal pain, suffering and distress should be used.

5.4 Conservation

The SPCA opposes any changes made to the environment which may disturb the natural balance of wildlife.

Many species, including endangered species, have a far better chance of survival if their environment remains unaltered.

5.5 Biological control

The SPCA is generally opposed to the use of biological methods of controlling vertebrate pests, but acknowledges that each proposal must be carefully considered on its own merits.

The SPCA believes that any form of biological control for vertebrate pests must be very carefully researched before any approval is issued, taking into account its humaneness and the possibility of it crossing to other species.

5.6 Fertility control

The SPCA supports research to develop species-specific fertility control methods in order to regulate wildlife population sizes, where these methods are known to be humane and where they do not adversely disrupt the social structure of the population they affect.

The SPCA acknowledges that fertility control in wildlife populations could be of great benefit. However, it is vital that the methods used are humane, and that the social structure of the populations to be controlled is not put out of balance.

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6. ANIMALS IN ENTERTAINMENT

6.1 Captive animals

The SPCA is opposed to the confinement of captive animals in conditions likely to cause suffering or distress.

The SPCA believes that animals held captive, such as in zoos and wildlife parks, must be provided with adequate accommodation and living space appropriate for the species. All captive animals should be provided with an appropriate environment enrichment programme to alleviate boredom.

6.2 Performing animals

The SPCA is opposed to the use of performing animals in any form of entertainment where suffering, distress or injury is likely to occur.

The SPCA accepts the use of performing animals, such as in circuses, only where no suffering or distress is likely to be caused during training and performances, and the animals are provided with adequate accommodation and living space appropriate for the species. Animals should be provided with an appropriate environment enrichment programme to alleviate boredom during periods when they are not training or performing.

6.3 Exotic animals in circuses

The SPCA is opposed to the use of exotic animals in circuses.

The SPCA believes that exotic animals used in circuses inevitably suffer from inadequate accommodation and living space, due to the transient nature of circuses. Training techniques cannot overcome the animals' need for complex, enriched environments. If exotic animals escape from circuses, they are likely to endanger themselves and the public.

6.4 Rodeos

The SPCA is opposed to the use of animals in rodeos.

The SPCA believes that the skills demonstrated and promoted in rodeos are irrelevant in a modern society, and that the stress on all animals involved is such that their welfare is put at risk. The SPCA is opposed to the use of spurs and rowels in rodeos, and is particularly opposed to events such as bronco riding, calf roping and steer wrestling, where injury to animals may occur. The SPCA believes that rodeos are detrimental in terms of fostering a caring attitude towards living creatures.

6.5 Horse racing, trotting and greyhound racing

The SPCA is opposed to:

- striking horses with the whip causing pain and suffering;
- races, such as the steeplechase, in which excessive demands are made on the animal; and
- performance-enhancing drugs being administered to any competing animal.

The SPCA accepts the use of the whip in horse racing and trotting only as an aid to steering the horse. The SPCA opposes steeplechase events, as they inevitably put horses at risk of serious injury.

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6. ANIMALS IN ENTERTAINMENT – continued

6.6 Show jumping and eventing

The SPCA is opposed to practices in show jumping and eventing which cause suffering, distress or injury to the animals.

The SPCA accepts show jumping and eventing only when the tasks and jump heights are such that the potential for distress or injury to the horses is minimal.

6.7 Endurance riding

The SPCA is opposed to endurance riding events.

The SPCA views endurance riding events as being far too stressful and dangerous for the horses involved, and would like to see them discontinued.

6.8 Use of animals in promotional and fundraising events

The SPCA is opposed to the use of animals in promotional and fundraising events where suffering or distress is likely to occur.

The SPCA is concerned that, where animals are used in promotional and fundraising events, stress and suffering may occur due to inadequate temporary accommodation and lack of control of public interaction with the animals. A further concern is that promotional and fundraising events may be detrimental in terms of fostering a caring attitude towards living creatures. In particular, children's events such as greasy pig, rooster catching, and sheep and calf riding are totally opposed.

6.9 Live animals as prizes

The SPCA is opposed to the giving of live animals as prizes in lotteries and other competitions.

Animals given as prizes in any form of competition or lottery are likely to be accepted on impulse, and the winner may not have the facilities, time, financial means, level of knowledge or interest necessary to ensure the well-being of the animal.

6.10 Home video competitions

The SPCA is opposed to home video competitions where animals may be placed in danger or may undergo pain, suffering and distress for the purpose of filming competition entries.

The SPCA is concerned that the welfare of animals is often put at risk in the making of home videos, where the anticipation of the resulting video sequence and competition prizes overrides the appropriate treatment of the animals being filmed.

6.11 Fighting animals

The SPCA is opposed to organised animal fighting.

The SPCA views all forms of organised animal fighting as totally barbaric, particularly dogfighting and cockfighting.

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7. BLOOD SPORTS

7.1 Horseback Hunting

The SPCA is opposed to horseback hunting of animals with hounds.

The SPCA believes that horseback hunting of animals with hounds is cruel and unnecessary, and should be banned.

7.2 Shooting

The SPCA is opposed to the shooting of any animal purely for sport.

While the SPCA is opposed to shooting purely for sport, it acknowledges the role currently played by shooters in the control of some feral animal populations. At present, there is often no practical humane alternative for the control of feral populations and, if no shooting were to be carried out, the use of other current methods such as trapping and poisoning would increase. However, shooters must be proficient at shooting to kill. Where an animal is merely wounded, the shooter must ensure that it is humanely dispatched.

7.3 Game fishing

The SPCA is opposed to the use of “light tackle” to catch large game fish.

The use of light tackle to land a fish which weighs many times the breaking strain of the tackle is unacceptable as it unnecessarily prolongs the pain and distress suffered by the fish. If fishing is to be undertaken, it should be with tackle which is sufficiently robust to ensure the landing of the fish efficiently and quickly, and the fish should immediately be humanely killed. The SPCA considers that the use of any line or tackle with a breaking strain of less than 56 kg, when targeting fish of more than 100 kg in weight, is unacceptable.

The SPCA is opposed to the practice of “tagging and release” of large game fish.

Considerable anecdotal evidence points to up to 50 per cent of large game fish which are caught, tagged and released dying as a result of the trauma and distress they received during their capture. Most of these fish have been “played” for extended periods of time. Until it can be shown that “tagging and release” is not injurious to the welfare of large game fish the SPCA will oppose the practice.

7.4 Live baiting

The SPCA is opposed to the use of live bait in game or any other type of fishing.

The SPCA believes that the practice of threading small live fish onto hooks as a lure for larger fish is cruel and totally unacceptable in that it causes unreasonable and unnecessary pain and distress to the bait fish.

7.5 Shark finning

The SPCA is opposed to shark finning.

The SPCA believes that the practice of cutting the fins from live sharks and leaving the shark to die at sea is barbaric and unacceptable.

7.6 Crayfish and rock lobster

The SPCA is opposed to the killing of crayfish or rock lobster without first being thoroughly chilled in an ice slurry.

Whatever method of slaughter is used, thorough chilling first in an ice slurry induces anaesthesia and renders the slaughter humane.

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8. ANIMALS IN EDUCATION

8.1 Use of animals in education

The SPCA is opposed to the use of animals in education where distress or suffering is likely to be caused to the animals concerned.

8.2 Keeping of animals in schools

The SPCA is opposed to the keeping of animals in schools unless proper provision is made for their physical and mental well-being.

Animals kept in schools must not be allowed to breed.

The requirements to safeguard the physical and mental well-being of animals in schools are:

- *that a named adult is at all times responsible for the welfare and care of the animals;*
- *that a suitable environment is provided;*
- *that provision is made for suitable housing, daily care and veterinary care at all times, including during term time, weekends and holidays;*
- *that any contact between students and animals is supervised and controlled;*
- *that the animals are given adequate "rest" periods away from disturbance; and*
- *that the animals are prevented from breeding. The Society believes that programmes of study involving the breeding of animals do not promote responsible attitudes to the welfare and care of animals.*

8.3 Dissection

The SPCA is opposed to the continued inclusion of dissection in the school curriculum.

The SPCA is opposed to any student being compelled to either perform or watch dissection.

The SPCA advocates the creation and use of educational resources which provide alternatives to dissection.

The SPCA believes that the continued inclusion of dissection in primary, intermediate and secondary school curricula can engender a general desensitisation and a lessening of respect for life. The SPCA accepts dissection as a teaching aid in veterinary colleges, but encourages a greater use of computer modelling techniques for teaching.

8.4 Teaching

The SPCA strongly advocates the inclusion of animal welfare in the school curriculum as a compulsory subject.

The SPCA believes that all students are entitled to receive animal welfare education. If children are taught at an early age to consider the welfare of animals, they are far more likely to grow into young adults who have a respect not only for animals but also for their fellow human beings.

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8. ANIMALS IN EDUCATION – continued

8.5 Educational visits

The SPCA supports educational visits to animal-related venues, provided that the visits do not increase the stress levels of, or cause unnecessary disturbance to, the animals.

Educational visits should be structured to highlight and define animal welfare issues. Preliminary visits by group leaders are essential to assess standards of animal welfare at the venue.