

Welfare Policy

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Animal Welfare Policy – given to students and available online

Scope

The directives presented within this policy govern the care and use of animals involved with the aid of teaching and student interaction. The directives issued in this policy apply to all South Eastern Regional College (thereafter known as SERC) students, staff and contracted outside agencies who would be required access to the animal house. The policy applies to all activities involved with but not limited to activities performed within the animal house. The terms animals used in this policy covers all animals defined in the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and Welfare of Animals (Northern Ireland) 2011 as

- a vertebrate other than man
- it is of the kind commonly domesticated in Northern Ireland
- extend the definition of “animal” so as to also include invertebrates of any description
- is under control whether on a permanent or temporary basis
- is not living in a wild state

Introduction

Where animals are kept in schools, proper provision should be made for their physical and mental wellbeing. The necessary requirements for the physical and mental wellbeing of animals in schools and colleges are:

- that a named person is at all times responsible for the welfare and husbandry of the animals – this includes legal responsibility under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.
- that a suitable environment that satisfies the animal’s physical, social and behavioural needs is provided and that provision can be made for suitable housing, husbandry and veterinary care at all times including term time, weekends and during holidays.
- that any contact between pupils and animals is supervised and controlled by someone competent and knowledgeable about the animal.
- that the animals are given adequate ‘rest’ periods away from disturbance.
- that the species’ lifestyle is compatible with the school day.
- that any animals kept are prevented from indiscriminate breeding.

Background

The use of animals within SERC animal house has been crucial to the understanding and improvement of educational development.

Policy

A. Acquiring animals

Where by all means possible the SERC and officiates will acquire animals that are from known reputable sources. Exotic animals and animals that may fall under the description of the term exotic should by all possible means come from captive bred circumstances. All CITIES documentation required for any animal which falls under the CITIES Annex 1 should have correct documentation.

B. Care, treatment and the use of animals

SERC does not allow mistreatment of animals. All animals are to be treated with utmost respect and care. Any person found to be mistreating an animal will be suspended under investigation. Any individual who witnesses the mistreatment of animals by another individual is also subject to interview unless he/she reports the mistreatment to SERC during that current working day or shortly thereafter. SERC reserves the right to press criminal charges against anyone who mistreats animals. The mistreatment of an animal is defined as hitting, prodding, kicking, or performing any other action that may cause undue stress or pain to the animal. If you are unsure about what constitutes correct and humane animal care, it is your responsibility to seek assistance and guidance from a supervisor.

Accessing the Animal House

Access to the SERC animal house should be gained by the authorised staff member and students must be trained in the procedures for working in the Animal House. This training must be recorded.

- Students are not permitted to enter the Animal House without the permission AND supervision of their lecturer.
- Doors to Animal Houses must be kept closed except when entering or leaving.
- NEVER open Animal House doors unless all animals are under control.

Personal Protective Clothing (PPE)

- Put on the necessary PPE on entering the Animal House (such as protective coats, disposable gloves, masks and eyewear).
- PPE must be removed and disposed of in the correct waste containers. Re-usable clothing should be replaced in the correct storage location or discarded into laundry basket as directed. Masks should be the last item removed.

Animal Handling

- BEFORE being permitted to handle animals, staff and students must provide written evidence of an up-to-date tetanus toxoid immunisation.
- Hayfever, asthma or 'animal related' allergy sufferers must inform the College and seek medical advice before entering the Animal House. Allergy sufferers must provide written evidence from a GP to show that they are not at risk when working in the Animal House.
- Animals must not be handled or fed by students without permission and supervision of the lecturer in charge of the class.
- Animal bites and scratches must be reported to the lecturer in charge of the class.
- Avoid carrying animals in open stock cages between rooms. Transfer them to a clean, covered cage or box or use enclosed transport trolleys if available in the Animal House.
- Keep work areas clean. All waste must be disposed of promptly and correctly into waste containers.
- Students not behaving in a responsible manner will be excluded from the Animal House.

Hygiene

- NEVER eat, drink or take medications when in the Animal House.
- ALWAYS wash your hands, even if you have worn gloves, on leaving the Animal House.

C. Transportation of animals

The welfare of animals in transport is regulated by “The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 as amended” in an aim to improve animal welfare and to ensure animal protection during transit. The general provision for animals that are any “vertebrate animals or any cold blooded invertebrate animal” in transit are:

- It is an offence to transport any animal in a way which causes or is likely to cause, injury or unnecessary suffering to that animal

- It is an offence to transport any animal kept in receptacles or a means of transport with inappropriate space, ventilation, temperature or security and without a supply of liquid and oxygen as appropriate for the species concerned

By signing this form, I am stating that I have received the animal house policy and understand these procedures and will abide by this policy. If I do not abide by the policy, I understand that there will be an investigation and could face possible criminal charges or removal from the site.

As animal caretakers, all students, employees of SERC and all individuals holding contracts with SERC have a moral and ethical obligation to provide humane treatment to animals in their care. Wilful abuse, cruelty and/or neglect are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.