

**CANADIAN COUNCIL ON ANIMAL CARE
GUIDING PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE USE OF ANIMALS IN THE
CLASSROOM AT THE PRE UNIVERSITY LEVEL**

I. PURPOSE

These guiding principles have been prepared by the Canadian Council on Animal Care. They are recommended for use of Departments of Education and Boards of Education across Canada in order to ensure adequate safeguards exist for the proper care and use of animals in experimentation in the classroom, in the schools, in their jurisdiction.

These guidelines are not for use by students preparing projects for exhibit in Science Fairs. Students preparing projects for Science Fairs must adhere to the Youth Science Fair Regulations for Animal Experimentations, prepared and distributed, by the Youth Science Foundation, Suite 302, 151 Slater Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5H3.

II. PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Biological experimentation involving animals in the classroom is essential for an understanding of living processes. Such studies should lead to a respect for all living things. All aspects of the study must be within the comprehension and capabilities of the student undertaking the study.

Lower orders of life are preferable subjects for experimentation at the pre-university level. Such lower orders as bacteria, fungi, protozoa, and insects can reveal much basic biological information, and they should be used for experimentation, wherever and whenever possible.

III. CARE OF EXPERIMENTAL ANIMALS

The care of experimental animals in the school should embody the principles laid down in the Care of Experimental Animals, A Guide for Canada, as prepared and distributed, by the Canadian Council on Animal Care.

The following principles are necessary in order to provide optimal animal care:

- A. The maintenance of animals in a classroom shared by students on a long term basis, is not recommended. Therefore, animal quarters specifically for housing of animals should be provided.
- B. All experimental animals used in teaching programs must be properly cared for. Animal quarters should be made comfortable by provisions for sanitation, protection from the elements and have sufficient space for normal behavioural and postural requirements of the species. The living quarters shall have surfaces that may be easily cleaned, good ventilation and lighting, well regulated temperatures and cages of sufficient size to prevent overcrowding. Animals must be protected from direct sunlight or other environmental factors which may disturb the well-being of the animal.

**CANADIAN COUNCIL ON ANIMAL CARE
GUIDING PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE USE OF ANIMALS IN THE
CLASSROOM AT THE PRE UNIVERSITY LEVEL**

- C. Food should be palatable, of sufficient quantity and balance to maintain a good standard of nutrition. Animals shall not be allowed to go below the maintenance level of nutrition. *Clean drinking water shall be available at all times.* Containers for food and water should be of a design, made specifically for that purpose.
- D. Colonies and animal quarters shall be supervised by a science teacher experienced in animal care. The students and other animal care staff shall be trained and required, to handle the animals gently and humanely.
- E. All animals must be disposed of in a humane manner. If euthanasia has to be carried out, an approved humane method must be used and carried out by an adult experienced in the use of such procedures.
- F. The use of animals must comply with existing local, provincial or federal legislation.
- G. The procurement and use of wild animals and birds must comply with the Migratory Birds Convention Act of Canada, the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (ratified by Order In Council, July 3, 1975) as well as any existing legislation at the Provincial level concerned with wild animals and exotic species.

IV. EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES

- A. All experiments should be carried out under the supervision of a competent science teacher. It is the responsibility of the qualified science teacher to ensure the student has the necessary comprehension for the study to be undertaken.
- B. Students should not be allowed to take animals home to carry out experimental studies. All studies involving animals must be carried out in a suitable area in the school.
- C. All students carrying out projects involving *vertebrate animals* must adhere to the following guidelines:
 - 1. No experimental procedures shall be attempted on a vertebrate animal that should subject it to pain or distinct discomfort, or interferes with it's health.
 - 2. Students shall not perform surgery on vertebrate animals.

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE USE OF ANIMALS IN THE
CLASSROOM AT THE PRE UNIVERSITY LEVEL**

3. Experimental procedures shall not involve the use of:
 - a) microorganisms which can cause diseases in man or animals
 - b) ionizing radiation
 - c) cancer producing agents
 - d) drugs or chemicals at toxic levels
 - e) alcohol in any form
 - f) drugs that may produce pain
 - g) drugs known to produce adverse reasons, side effects or capable of producing birth deformities
 4. Experimental treatments should not include electric shock, exercise until exhaustion, or other distressing stimuli.
 5. Behavioural studies should use only reward (positive reinforcement) and not punishment in training programs.
 6. If egg embryos are subjected to experimental manipulations, the embryo must be destroyed humanely two (2) days prior to hatching. If normal egg embryos are to be hatched, satisfactory humane considerations must be made for disposal of the young birds.
- D. The use of anaesthetic agents, by students, is not recommended and in the case of some anaesthetics nor permitted by law.
- E. Information on the care, housing and management for individual species, as well suitable experiments for use at the pre-university level, may be obtained from the Canadian Council on Animal Care, 151 Slater Street, Suite 1105, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5H3.