Animals On Campus

Policy Scope
This policy relates to ACC Marsden Park Ltd.

Legislation
Animal Research Act 1985
Animal Research Regulation 1995

Policy
The Principal will designate an Animal Welfare Liaison Officer (AWLO) to ensure that this policy is implemented.

Category 1 and 2 animals are authorised on campus provided that:
1. The teacher who brought the animal onto campus takes responsibility for the animal’s welfare including the procedures as described in this policy.
2. The animal(s) is treated well
3. The animal(s) habitat is maintained

Category 3, Category 4 & Category 5 animals are not permitted on campus unless in the care of an approved person that takes responsibility for the care and wellbeing of the animal.

The purpose of this policy is to provide specific procedures for Category 1 animals on campus. If a teacher wishes to introduce a Category 1 animal on campus they must first request that procedures are updated to include the care and well being of the Category 1 animal.

This policy also provides a procedure for dissection in the classroom.

Documentation
Before any animal is brought on campus, the Teacher must complete the “Animal Research Authority (Schools)” Form and submit it to the AWLO and the Principal for approval.
Classroom Aquariums

Guidelines
Aquariums must provide sufficient space and amount of water for fish depending on the size, number of fish and type of aquarium. Fish must have adequate space to swim around and participate in normal behaviours. The aquariums must also be able to hold an ample amount of water and be located in an appropriate position in the room.

The Habitat
1. 4.5 litres of water per 1.5cms of fish must be provided as a minimum water requirement (more space required if not ventilated)
2. 1-2 aerators to be used per 35-75 litres of water
3. Suitable covers must be used on tanks
4. Water must be suitably conditioned prior to use with all chemicals and residues removed
5. Water pH must be suitable for fish
6. Water temperature must be suitable for the species of fish, for temperate and tropical fish 22-25oC is suitable
7. A high level of hygiene and cleanliness must be kept at all times
8. Tanks must not be exposed to direct sunlight
9. Natural environment should be replicated in the tank
10. Normal diurnal pattern of lighting must be provided
11. Air surrounding aquariums must be of acceptable quality with respect to dust, chemicals and smells with special care taken when using insecticidal sprays.

The tank needs to be kept at room temperature and should not be exposed to direct sunlight, as the sunlight will overheat the water and cause a rapid growth of algae.

The tank should include plants and other invertebrates, and be allowed to stabilise for one to two weeks before the fish are added. Filtration and aeration can be added to facilitate fish survival but each addition of physical support to the tank increases the probability of the system breaking down. It also adds to the amount of monitoring required. If tropical fish are to be kept, a heating and temperature control system must be used.

With a marine tank, the system becomes even more complex and is not recommended unless you have prior experience and success in another context such as at home.

The following points are general rules for preparing freshwater aquaria suitable for tropical and temperate fish species, including Australian native fish.

When adding the fish to the tank, float the bag in the aquarium for at least 10 minutes to allow the fish to acclimatise to the new water temperature. Then open the bag and slowly add small amount of tank water to the bag over the next 15 minutes. After this has been carried out, the fish can then be netted from the bag and released into the tank.
Light
The aquarium should not be exposed to direct sunlight as the sunlight will overheat the water and cause a rapid growth of algae. A diffused, filtered natural light can be used. If using artificial light, fluorescent tubes can be used for almost all aquariums. A timer must control the amount of light. Lights must not be suddenly turned on and off because some fish may become very nervous and move erratically around the tank. A dimmer light switch will avoid this problem. The correct lighting is very important for aquarium plants. In a new aquarium, 12 hours of artificial lighting each day should be enough for most aquatic plants. The exposure time may be increased or decreased until a good plant growth rate is achieved.

Shelter
An aquarium should try to replicate the natural environment of the fish. This can be achieved by provide aquatic plants, objects for hiding and exploring like rocks and hollow pipes and logs. Rocky overhangs can also provide fish with areas of shelter and privacy which is essential their wellbeing and reduces stress when being observed.

Bedding
Washed river gravel is ideal as a bedding. Gravel used must be clean and free from chemical residue. The bottom of the tank should be covered with an average of 75mm.

Filtration
This process has a very significant effect on the water quality and fish health. The three types of filtration are mechanical, biological and chemical. The most popular and easiest to apply is mechanical filtration. This is recommended to improve fish health and survival.

Cleaning
Water should be changed about once every one to two months. It is important not to replace all the water at once, 20–25% of the volume is sufficient. A major cleaning should be undertaken once every four months. The fish must be removed, placed in a container with 25% of the original tank water and covered. The walls of the tank must be cleaned carefully, with all chemical residue from the cleaning being rinsed away. Thoroughly wash sand and gravel to remove any accumulated debris. The tank should be two-thirds filled with tap water and allowed to stand for at least half a day before the remaining sand or gravel, water and fish are returned to the tank. Water is aged by leaving it stand for 24 hours or by using a chemical ageing agent. Ensure that the aging process has been carried out prior to beginning tank cleaning. Have the aged water ready to place into the clean tank.

Nesting
Details about breeding tanks vary with each species. Separate breeding tanks may be required.

Axolotls

Guidelines
Aquariums must provide sufficient space for axolotls to move around and participate in normal behaviours. The aquariums must also be able to hold a sufficient amount of water and be located in an appropriate position in the room.

The Habitat
1. 60 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm is the minimum space required for a pair of adult axolotls
2. Water must be at least 20-25 cms deep
3. Water must be conditioned prior to use with all chemicals and residues removed
4. Water pH must be between 6.5 and 8
5. Water temperature must be 15-18oC and must never exceed 22o C
6. A high level of hygiene and cleanliness must be kept at all times
7. Dim lighting is preferred and dark areas must be provided
8. Faeces accumulations must be removed regularly
9. Water circulation must be kept to a minimum
10. Normal diurnal pattern of lighting must be provided with periods of dark
11. Air surrounding aquariums must be of acceptable quality with respect to dust, chemicals and smells
12. All animals must be observed moving during daily inspections.

Axolotls should not be kept in aquariums with other species.

Space
Aquariums must provide a minimum area of 60 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm per full-grown pair of axolotls. The water height should be 20–25 cm.

Water
This is the most important component of the axolotl’s environment. Never house them in extremely soft or distilled water. Remove any chlorine, chloramines or ammonia that may have been added as part of water treatment. Commercial preparations are available for this purpose or water can be aged. Keep the pH between 6.5 and 8.0.

Temperature
Axolotls thrive at cool temperatures. The optimum range is 15–18oC. They should never be kept above 22oC. To prevent overheating, never house axolotls where they are exposed to direct sun. During heat waves a damp towel can be draped of the aquarium with a fan blowing air across it.

Lighting
Axolotls prefer dim light. Normal indoor lighting, without aquarium lights, is sufficient. If the tank is brightly lit for the benefit of live water plants, then darker areas must also be established.
Ventilation
An aquarium lid is not necessary if the water surface is at least 7 cm lower than the top. The tank should be aerated as axolotls extract oxygen from the water through their gills. In laboratory settings, a mesh or other suitable cover may be appropriate.

Filtration
Rapidly circulating water is stressful to axolotls. If filtration is used, the rate of circulation should be as slow as possible.

Shelter
A clump of water plants or a rocky overhang provides a refuge from bright lights and from other axolotls. Where brighter lights are used to promote plant growth, it is very important to provide dark areas for animals to retreat to.

Cleaning
Weekly partial water changes, involving removal of about 25% of the water, is recommended, using conditioned water of the same temperature. Regular removal of solid waste is necessary. Bacterial scum that grows on the aquarium must be removed regularly as it can affect the axolotl’s skin and cause toe loss. Once the water has been removed, the tank can be cleaned safely with a scour pad dipped in a mixture of baking soda and salt at a 2:1 ratio. Rinse the tank gently and fill with conditioned water. Prior to disposal of the wastewater, Add a bleach solution of one part bleach to five parts water. Pour the water down a toilet bowl. Untreated water should not be discarded into storm water drains or septic tank systems.
Dissection of Animals
Teachers wishing to use dissection as a teaching activity can do so in any of the following ways:

1. Whole dead animals that have been purchased from the butcher, supermarket, fish market or abattoir, e.g. chickens, fish, crustaceans
2. Animal parts that have been purchased from the butcher, supermarket or abattoir, e.g. kidneys, hearts, livers, lungs
3. Prepared specimens that have been purchased from biological suppliers, e.g. frozen rats
4. Plant or other non-animal material that may help develop dexterity and proficiency in using instruments.
5. No student can be compelled to undertake dissection of a dead animal. Students who select not to be involved in a dissection must be offered an alternative activity that allows them to achieve the same outcome.

Policy Review
At the introduction of a new Category 1-2 animal on campus or on change of legislation or at the discretion of the School Board of ACC Marsden Park Ltd.

Policy Version
4.0