

## Classroom Pets

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports classroom pets so long as the animal is owned by a responsible adult and taken home when school is not in session. Students must be taught how to care for, respect, and handle any animal visiting the classroom.

### Rationale

- Students who assist with pet care not only learn practical information about animal needs and behaviours, they also learn empathy and responsibility.
- Teachers are ultimately responsible for pet care. Students will look to their teacher as a model of responsible pet ownership. The Society believes the best way to model responsible pet ownership is for the teacher to adopt the animal and assume full responsibility for the pet.
- Before committing to a classroom pet, the responsibilities and requirements for owning the animal must be thoroughly researched. Teachers must determine the appropriate type of pet for a classroom setting, species and breed-specific needs, cost of food, shelter, and veterinary care, potential liability issues, proper animal handling, potential health concerns (e.g. student allergies), and animal behaviour and body language.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Pets in Classrooms." ASPCA policy statement, New York, n.d.
2. British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Classroom Pets." BC SPCCA position statement, Vancouver, 2009.
3. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Study and Use of Animals in Elementary and Secondary Schools." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, 1994.