



# CAT CARE IS FOR LIFE

CROSS CURRICULA ACTIVITIES BASED ON THE COMPANION CATS CODE OF WELFARE BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



Prior to starting this unit – you may wish to revisit the concepts developed in 'Animal Welfare in New Zealand - Pgs 38-39 starters&strategies Term Three 2007 or online at [www.teachingonline.org](http://www.teachingonline.org) > select Teachers Magazine > select Term 3, 2007.

## TUNING IN TO CATS

- Find out how many students have a cat or have had a cat as a pet at home. Extend this to a school-wide survey to find out:
  - the total number of cats your school families own
  - the most popular type and/or breed of cat
  - the ratio of pet cats to dogs
  - most common and most unusual names.
- Have students bring pictures of their cats for a classroom wall display and write short descriptions of some of their most endearing traits to add to the display.
- Using this information as a guide, have students guesstimate the total number of pet cats in New Zealand (it is estimated at between 900,000 and 1.5 million). Are they surprised at this number? Tell the class that cats are by far the most commonly owned household animal in New Zealand.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Have students conduct online research into the history of cats at the following websites:

[www.catsinfo.com/history.html](http://www.catsinfo.com/history.html)

[www.geocities.com/heartland/ranch/2626/history.htm](http://www.geocities.com/heartland/ranch/2626/history.htm)

[www.cats.org.uk/catsforkids/](http://www.cats.org.uk/catsforkids/)

## THE COMPANION ANIMALS CONCEPT

- Ask the class to list the reasons why cats are such popular pets. Introduce the idea of 'companion animals' as the way we describe our pets. Have students discuss and brainstorm the many ways that cats provide companionship for humans.
- Introduce the idea that it is a 'two way' relationship and that just as a cat provides us with companionship, we in return must provide for the welfare (health, care and comfort) of our companion animal.
- Brainstorm a preliminary list of ways we can provide for the welfare/care of our cat. Can the students remember the five animal freedoms (Freedom from: hunger and thirst; discomfort; pain; injury; and disease; fear and distress; and freedom to express normal animal behaviour)? Have students apply the five freedoms to the welfare of cats as a companion animal.

## Curriculum Areas: Levels 3-4

### Social Sciences:

#### Identity, Culture and Organisation

- Understanding why we as a society need to make rules and develop codes of welfare and care for companion animals we own and are responsible for.

### Science:

#### Living World

- Investigating the needs and care of cats, the reasons for these needs and sharing this increasing knowledge with the school and local community.

### English:

- Using appropriate ways of gathering knowledge and communicating these ideas to the wider community:

#### Links to Technology and Health.

## TEACHER PREPARATION

Download the Companion Cats Code of Welfare at: [www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare/req/codes](http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare/req/codes)

Scroll down to Companion Cats (pdf). Print out from page 11, photocopy and distribute to students.

Alternatively students can select topic pages from the pdf when downloaded to the desktop.

## THE COMPANION CATS CODE OF WELFARE

- Do the students know that in New Zealand we take the care of animals very seriously and have an 'Act of Parliament' (a law) that makes all animal owners responsible for the health, care and behavioural needs of the animals they own. Tell students that vets, farming organisations and the SPCA take proper animal care very seriously and anyone found to have mistreated an animal can be prosecuted and face serious punishments – even being prevented from ever owning an animal again.
- Tell the students that we now have a *Companion Cats Code of Welfare* that clearly sets out in detail, how we must look after these companion animals



# CARING FOR OUR COMPANIONS



- Introduce the idea that cats are divided into three categories: companion cats; stray cats and feral cats. Challenge students to write a definition of each category, **eg**
  - a companion cat lives with humans and depends on humans for its needs
  - a stray cat is a companion cat that is lost or has been abandoned by humans
  - a feral or wild cat is not a stray cat and does not depend on humans for its needs.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Tell students that feral cats are not part of the code but preventing people abandoning cats is. Have students speculate on why there are feral cats. To find out about the damage they do to native birds and animals visit the Environment Waikato website at: [www.ew.govt.nz/enviroinfo/pests/animals/](http://www.ew.govt.nz/enviroinfo/pests/animals/) >select feral cats/

## CATS CODE OF WELFARE AS A HANDBOOK

- Tell the students that when they begin studying the *Animal Welfare Companion Cats Code of Welfare*, it is helpful to think upon this as a very useful handbook that will help every cat lover give a high standard of care to their companion cat. Introduce and discuss the idea that the Code sets out the minimum level of care that a cat should receive and includes sections called 'recommended best practice'. If we follow 'recommended best practice', as the best way of keeping cats then we are making sure their welfare is as good as possible. Explain the concept of 'recommended best practice' to students, **eg**
  - in class we have pass marks for tests and exams but we should always try to do much better than that – we should always go for for the 'gold star' – the same for pets!Relate this to companion cats.
- Have groups discuss and write a statement in their own words which explains the following sentence: 'Ownership of a cat should be a commitment for the entire life of the animal'. Tell students that this is what the Code is based on.

## GROUP STUDY RESEARCH TASKS

- Begin study as a class, discussing, comment and gaining understanding of the (legal) obligations of owners and people in charge of cats (Page 11). Are there any other obligations the students think could/should be added?
- Divide the class into research groups corresponding with the important sections of the code, **eg**

<i>Adopting and Purchasing</i>	<i>Food and Water</i>
<i>Housing and Hygiene</i>	<i>Breeding</i>
<i>Health and Diseases</i>	<i>Care/Injury Collars</i>
<i>Behaviour Problems/ID</i>	<i>Transport of Cats</i>
- The group task is to work through their assigned section

- ...and summarise their findings briefly and using words that students in other classes will be able to easily understand. Encourage regular reporting back by groups as the research task continues so that their section of the Code research is seen as one part of a whole.

## PRESENTING OUR FINDINGS

- After research is complete, have each group cooperatively prepare a flashcard/powerpoint or OHP presentation of their findings to the class. Have each group comment on any new and interesting information that they found during their research.
- Have all groups summarise their findings in checklist form and contribute this to their previous cat wall display. Using the display as a visual aid, have each group prepare and deliver an oral report to other classes invited to visit the display. These reports could also be delivered as an on-going series at school assemblies.
- Each group contributes to a *companion cats care class* or school website pages designed in headings with 'anchor links' from each heading to the relevant information.
- Challenge students to develop and carry out multi-choice cat care quizzes suitable for older, same age and junior class students.
- Prepare and distribute an attractively designed summary manual of cat care findings to all cat owners at school and in the local community.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Invite a vet or cat breeder to talk to (and demonstrate) the class about best practice cat care.
- Plan a best practice poster blitz campaign at school with each poster stressing just one or two simple messages. Evaluate effectiveness with a multi-choice test.
- The Companion Animal Council have published a brochure (in laymans language) to complement the Code at: [www.nzcac.org.nz](http://www.nzcac.org.nz)

