Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools

ANIMAL VISIT PLANNING CHECKLIST – APPENDIX B

The principal provides a copy of *AP 306 Animal Visits in Schools* and this checklist to the animal handler and reviews the documents together.

The principal receives proof from the animal handler of training certification, up-to-date vaccinations, animal license, and proof the animal is in good health and forwards this information to the Superintendent of Education.

The principal shares the rationale for the inclusion of an animal visit with staff, invites staff to input around planning considerations based on students in classes where the animal may be present, and gathers information regarding allergies, phobias, or other concerns. An animal may be excluded from the school or parts of the school when there is a risk to the health or physical and/or mental well-being of students or staff

The principal sets up a team meeting to discuss concerns or questions brought forward by the staff. Target classrooms and students should also be discussed**.**

A planning meeting with the animal handler should be arranged with the following discussed:

- The purpose and function of the animal/visit and the support it provides students in areas such as the following: anxiety, self-regulation, trauma, social skills, compassion and empathy, self-esteem, memory, problem solving, and/or motivation to move.
- Clarification that the handler is solely responsible for the overall care and any costs associated with the animal.
- Plan for personal care of the animal during the school day including bio breaks and disposal of waste.
- Plan for educating the school staff on the role of the animal and the rules of conduct concerning interactions with the animal. Include plans for classroom and other areas of school such as hallway and recess if applicable. Consider routines that need to be established and expectations/rules of conduct for students and staff around the animal.
- Discuss which areas of the school the animal will have access to and what entrance will be used.
- Discuss dates/plan for integration of the animal to the school and/or classes.

The principal will ask the therapy dog handler to complete the School and Animal Handler Agreement (Appendix A) and will forward a copy to the Superintendent of Education.

Once the plan to integrate an animal visit has been established, the principal will send a letter home to parents/guardians of students in the school to inform them and offer to answer questions or address any concerns. The principal will also inform the School Community Council.

Arrange for the animal to first visit the school when students are not present in order to familiarize the animal to the school site and facilitate planning

Collaborate with the handler to develop an appropriate emergency plan that will include a plan for evacuation, lock down, fire drills, and any other relevant procedures

Ensure signage is placed on each entry door of the school to inform visitors of the presence of a visit to the school of an animal for educational purposes.

Monitor and review documentation annually to ensure that all certification, vaccination, licenses, and agreement is updated.

Maintain open communication with parents/guardians, staff, and School Community Council to proactively address concerns as they arise.