

Animal Ethics for Teachers and Students

How does this concern me?

Why do we need ethics approval?

All animals need to be cared for and should be treated with respect at all times as they are sentient living things. Under New Zealand law, everyone has a **legal duty to provide animals in their care with all of their needs** – food and water, shelter, the opportunity to behave normally, to be handled carefully by people, and to ensure/maintain their good health.

When do we need to consider animal ethics?

We need to consider applying for animal ethics approval when using animals in teaching or in an investigation or experiment and the animal is being ‘manipulated’. This means **changing the animal’s normal needs**, like what it eats and drinks, where it lives/sleeps or things it does (like its type of toys) in some way. This type of situation is when ethics approval is needed and is required under New Zealand’s law called the Animal Welfare Act.

Ethics approval means that an Animal Ethics Committee, a special group of people that includes science teachers, have reviewed the way a scientific investigation with the animal(s) will be carried out. When they review it, they check that the animal is well cared for and its health is maintained, if they think this is the case they will grant ethics approval.

Who may need to seek ethics approval?

Any teacher using animals in a class situation should check if they need approval.

Any student carrying out an investigation or experiment that involves animals should check if they need approval.

Still not Sure?

| No – ethics approval is not needed if: | Yes – ethics approval is needed if: |
|---|--|
| I have a class pet and the students will look after it carefully | My science fair project will investigate if chickens lay more eggs when different music is played to them |
| Our class will watch chickens hatch from eggs | I am planning to design and make a special ramp for my elderly dog to use so he finds it easier to get in and out of our car for my science fair project |
| We have many Monarch caterpillars that we will watch hatch into butterflies | My science fair project will investigate which treat my cat likes the best |

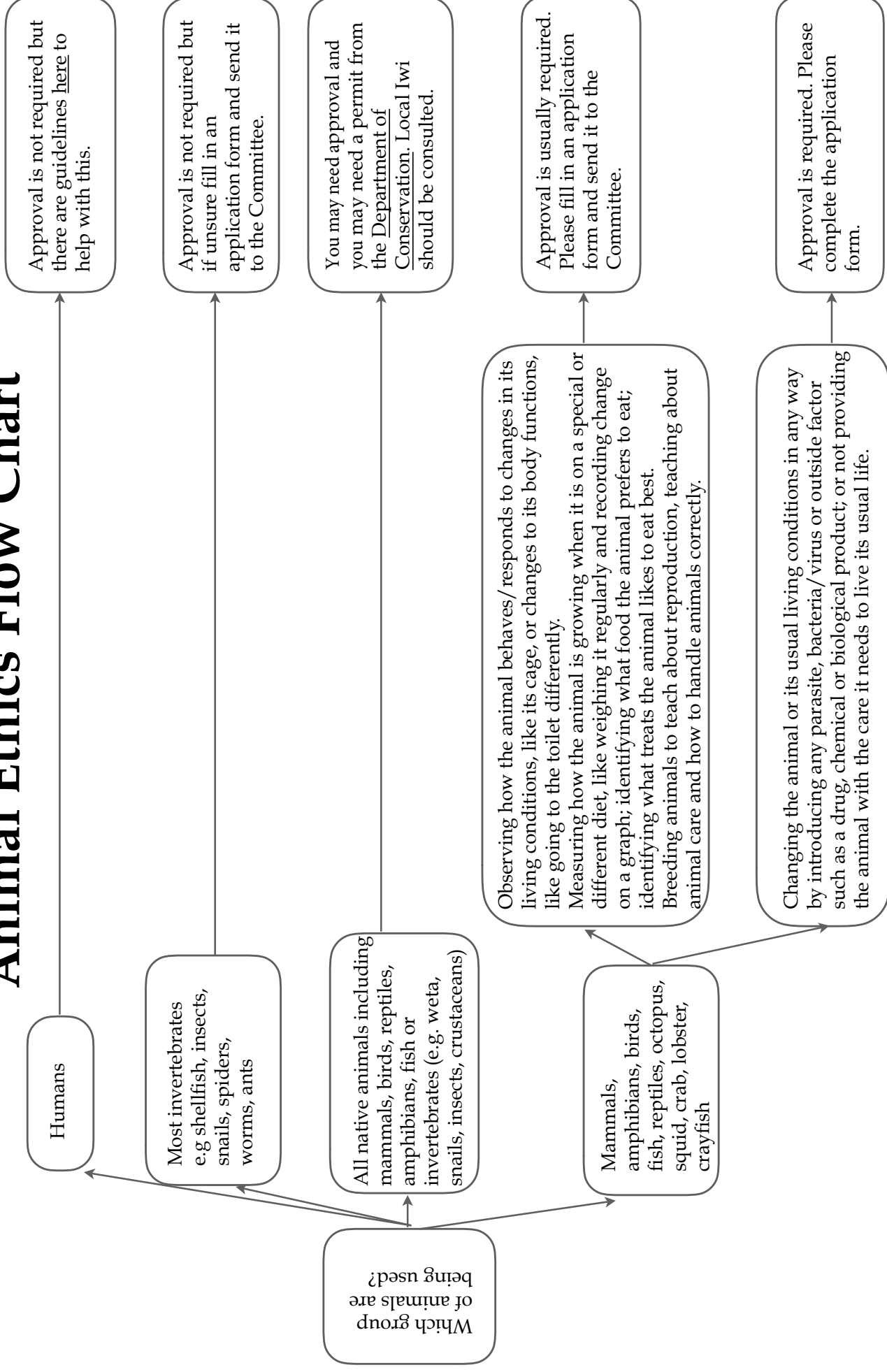
Animal Ethics Approval Process

1. Check the flow chart (see below)
2. Choose the correct application form - Teacher or Student
3. Send to animaethicscommittee@nzase.org.nz before the next meeting date.

If you are not sure then apply anyway!

Full details and all links can be found on the [NZASE website](#)

Animal Ethics Flow Chart



Teacher Background Information

The information below explains the difference in the examples. It identifies why ethics approval will or will not be needed.

| Situation | Justification |
|--|---|
| I have a class pet and the students will look after it carefully | The class pet is able to live in the way it usually would and nothing has been changed. Students interact with the class pet with respect. Ethics approval is NOT needed. |
| Our class will watch chickens hatch from eggs | The chickens' food, water and shelter have not been changed. They are able to move around in ways that they normally move. Their living conditions have not been changed at all and the students do not interact at all with the chickens. Ethics approval is NOT needed. |
| We have many Monarch caterpillars that we will watch hatch into butterflies | The Monarch caterpillars are able to live in the way they do normally. The students do not handle the caterpillars or butterflies. Because this type of invertebrate is not defined as an animal under the Animal Welfare Act, and it is not a native insect, ethics approval is NOT needed. |
| My science fair project will investigate if chickens lay more eggs when different music is played to them | The chickens have experienced a change in their living conditions with the playing of the music. Ethics approval IS needed. |
| I am planning to design and make a special ramp for my elderly dog to use so he finds it easier to get in and out of our car for my science fair project | The dog has a new method for getting in and out of the car so its usual living conditions have changed in some way, even though it is an improvement. Ethics approval IS needed. |
| My science fair project will investigate which treat my cat likes the best | The cat's normal food has been changed in some way because it is now eating a variety of types of cat treats that it doesn't usually eat. Ethics approval IS needed. |
| The students in my class will individually investigate the effect of changing conditions such as temperature on mud crabs | The mud crabs experienced a change in their usual conditions. This type of invertebrate is considered an animal under the Animal Welfare Act. Ethics approval IS needed. |

Native Animals

Special laws apply if native animals are being studied. For native animals, Department of Conservation approval might be needed, but Department of Conservation approval does not replace approval from an Animals Ethics Committee. If the native animal's normal needs are being changed, ethics approval will also need to be given. Local Iwi should also be consulted.