

SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

(In association with R.S.P.C.A. England)



FRIENDS for LIFE

9 January 2013

Dear Sirs,

I refer to Mr Winston Chin's letter ("Teach Kids About Kindness to Animals," Straits Times Forum, Jan 08, 2013), particularly his suggestion of introducing an education curriculum to inculcate kindness to animals.

It will please Mr Chin to know that in early Dec 2012, after Minister Heng Swee Kiat announced that his Ministry would embark on developing school children's character through the new character and citizenship education (CCE) syllabus, the SPCA wrote to the Minister to ask him to consider including a curriculum or module on responsible pet ownership and showing respect for animals in the new syllabus.

Often, due to the lack of interaction with animals, our children do not fully understand them. Some children harbour an irrational fear of animals because of uncorrected misconceptions, while others only understand animals superficially.

Research has shown that a child's attitude towards animals can predict future behavior. People who have hurt animals may eventually inflict violence towards humans. Teaching our children to show kindness and respect for animals is the first step in teaching them empathy, compassion and build moral character, reduce violence and build greater sense of responsibility and civic-mindedness.

Given the SPCA's education resources in the areas of responsible pet ownership and promoting animal welfare, we have offered to work with MOE to explore topics that would teach our children kindness and respect toward animals. We want to show our children that animals are living beings like us, we can use these interactions as 'teachable moments' to pass on social skills and teach our children how to behave toward other people.

Corinne Fong
Executive Director
Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals