



**Best Friends®**  
**Los Angeles**

Best Friends Animal Society-  
Los Angeles

**KITTEN NURSERY STANDARD  
OPERATING PROCEDURES**

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## COVER LETTER TO STAFF

This is your personal copy of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) Manual. SOPs are a key tool for the operation and management of the Best Friends Animal Society – Los Angeles Kitten Nursery Program. They establish a baseline for how all staff and volunteers perform routine shelter tasks. The consistency and predictability that SOPs can provide help to make life less stressful for the animals — and for people, too.

These Standard Operating Procedures are intended to supplement the Best Friends Animal Society

Employee Handbook and Policy Manual as well as the BFLA Cat Department SOP. Staff is expected to adhere to the policies listed in the Employee Handbook, Cat Department SOP, as well as these Standard Operating Procedures at all times. Any questions or concerns regarding anything listed in either of these documents must be promptly discussed with management.

The Standard Operating Procedures were written with everyone's input, and all staff are accountable for following them. These SOPs enable us to be consistent about expectations for every employee and to determine whether performance meets, exceeds, or falls short of expectations. Be sure to read the entire document and then review the sections that relate to your job. Discuss any questions that you have with your supervisor or manager.

The SOP manual is a 'living' document that will be updated as we identify better ways of doing our jobs and responding to the needs of the animals in our care and of the human community we serve. The formal procedure for suggesting and making changes to SOPs is outlined below. The Management Team will have the master and current copy of the SOPs.

### **PROCESS FOR CHANGES, UPDATES OR CLARIFICATIONS TO THE SOPs:**

To avoid confusion and inconsistency, only the Management Team can make the actual written changes to the SOPs. However, all staff can suggest changes as described below:

- If you have suggestions for change, deletions, or additions or are in need of further clarification, please discuss with your direct supervisor.
- After discussion with the entire team, the department supervisor will advise the manager of his/her team's suggestions or needed clarification.
- Your department manager will review the team's suggestions or needed clarification, and, in conjunction with Nursery Lead and other necessary department managers, determine if an update or change is needed.
- If the department managers agree to make the change, that section of the master SOP manual (both electronic and physical copy) is updated with the new wording and instruction.
- A Protocol Signoff will then go out to the staff with a summary of the update, and the page and section number that was updated. Each staff will be required to review the change and sign that they have read and understand the new or altered policy.

This manual is the foundation for the continued excellent performance of our staff and the organization. The manual will be used as a training document throughout the agency. We strongly encourage you to review SOPs in your department staff meetings on a regular basis. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their staff understand and follow the SOPs that apply to their roles in the agency.

Thank you for all the hard work you do each day for the animals in our care.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Best Friends Animal Society – Los Angeles Kitten Nursery (referred to herein as BFAS LA-KN) is a

facility that admits transfers of neonate kittens (under two months of age, and less than two pounds in weight) and mother cats with nursing kittens from the six Los Angeles City Shelters, and is responsible for their care after admission. This includes raising them to adoptable age and performing mandated vaccinations, microchip, city registration, and sterilization surgery before being placed for adoption.

Orphaned kittens and mother cats with nursing kittens are an at-risk population for two main reasons:

#### 1. Susceptibility to illness

- a. While kittens are growing, their immune systems are still maturing and forming. Therefore, they are more susceptible to diseases and illnesses.
- b. Mother cats are more susceptible to diseases and illnesses in a shelter environment due to increase in stress levels and limitations in housing. A mother cat must be kept in good health in order to provide the needs of her kittens.
- c. Due to the large number of animals in close proximity in a shelter environment, there is a greater risk of cross contamination and disease transmission.

#### 2. Medical and basic care resources

- a. After birth, neonatal kittens are completely unable to care for themselves. They cannot survive without care. Newborn kittens cannot independently urinate or defecate. They cannot regulate their own body temperature and are prone to hypothermia. They need around the clock feedings, sometimes as frequently as every two hours. Most shelters are not able to provide the level of care needed due to time and staffing constraints.
- b. Mother cats are less likely to be attentive to their litter of kittens due to the stressful environment of a shelter setting. Human monitoring, and many times intervention, is necessary to ensure the needs of the kitten are being met.
- c. The most critical time in a kitten's life is during the first 3 weeks of life. Physical growth and developmental changes occur quickly. It is difficult for a kitten to be successfully raised in a shelter environment during this period of time due to lack of socialization and ongoing exposure to disease.
- d. The rate of transmissible deadly disease (such as panleukopenia, calicivirus, and feline herpes virus) is very high in shelter settings due to the stray intake population, stress, and lack of isolation and quarantine areas.

### **Facility**

The BFAS-LA KN is located in Mission Hills, CA inside the Pet Adoption Center. There are two rooms in the nursery that house kittens in stainless steel kennels. The main nursery floor consists of five aquariums (housing newborn to 2 week old kittens) and thirty nine stainless steel kennels for housing kittens 2-8 weeks of age, as well as queens with nursing kittens. The office space/kitchen is also utilized to house 5 incubators for severe medical cases. In total, the Kitten Nursery has 44 total cage spaces and can contain around 150 kittens during the peak of kitten season.

## **SECTION 1: OPERATIONS**

Animal care operations are intended to provide quality care to the onsite animals in an efficient manner.

Each step of the process should be done in order to produce consistent quality. Each team member should be completing the same tasks, the same way, with the same results.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Address**

[insert address]

### **Hours of Operation**

The Kitten Nursery is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays.

### **Contact Information**

Kitten Nursery Landline: [insert phone]

Email: [insert email]

## **STAFF EXPECTATIONS**

Best Friends – Los Angeles provides staff with clear, concise expectations that staff must adhere to at all times. These expectations are designed to provide consistency for the staff, as well as the public, as well as provide a system to hold staff accountable.

### **Dress code**

All staff must, at all times, adhere to the dress code provided in the Best Friends Animal Society Employee Handbook and Policy Manual.

Additionally, Kitten Nursery staff shall adhere to the following dress code at all times:

- Wear long pants - shorts, skirts, and cut offs not acceptable
- Closed toed shoes must be worn at all times
- Approved and provided staff t-shirts, hoodies, and other outerwear only
- Clean scrubs are acceptable
- Long hair should be pulled back to maximize contagion control

### **Kitten Nursery Phone Line**

It is the responsibility of the Kitten Nursery Caregivers to answer the phone in the office, answer all Kitten Nursery related questions and inquiries, and direct any other inquiries. Voicemail must be checked promptly and calls returned within the same business day. Calls that should be directed to other departments must be immediately forwarded.

### **Foster Emergency Phone Line**

The foster emergency line is used for foster related emergencies. The overnight veterinary assistants are responsible for answering the foster emergency line and assisting foster parents and their animals. In the absence of the overnight veterinary assistants, the overnight cat caregivers will answer this line. Calls must be communicated with the foster, nursery, and medical departments.

## Music

Staff is encouraged to play music at the Kitten Nursery. Music must be played at a volume low enough not to interfere with conversation, or to cause the animals any undue stress. Music must also be appropriate at all times, and should not be aversive to any volunteers (examples of acceptable music are classical, jazz, or something similar).

## Storage and Shared Areas

All storage areas must be kept clean and organized, and all items stored must be clearly labeled. Areas should be stocked regularly so that staff and volunteers have easy access to any and all items needed to complete required tasks. Staff must maintain a clean and organized work area within the office as well. This is a shared space, and keeping personal areas clean and free of clutter is required.

## KITTEN NURSERY AREAS

Nursery staff is responsible for the daily care of the animals in all rooms of the nursery. However, interns and volunteers are permitted to assist in the cleaning and feeding and should be utilized whenever possible to ensure that care is given at the appropriately scheduled times.

The *Aquariums* are the primary area to house the bottle-fed orphaned kittens 2 weeks of age and younger who come into the nursery. These kittens should be fed every 2-3 hours.

The *Main Floor* houses the rest of the nursery population. After reaching 2 weeks of age, kittens should be moved into a kennel of an appropriate size for the rest of their stay in the nursery. Queens and their kittens are also housed on the Main Floor.

The *Nursery Kitchen* is for the preparation of food for kittens, as well as an area to clean and sanitize dishes and other nursery items such as snuggle discs and plastic toys.

The *Nursery Office* is where the nursery staff performs administrative duties and houses kittens under close medical observation. Medical and general nursery supplies are also stored in this room.

## Staff Only Areas

Cat Quarantine Rooms 1 & 2 are restricted from the general public. Only staff is permitted in these rooms, and guests, members of the public, and fosters are strictly prohibited. Volunteers and Interns are permitted to assist in these areas only once they have completed their training with staff and have become certified.

*Cat Quarantine Rooms 1 & 2* house panleukopenia confirmed cats and kittens. Nursery staff will need to care for underage kittens in these rooms when kittens are not eating on their own, and/or are declining in health and need more care than what the cat staff is able to provide.

## NURSERY OPENING, CLOSING, AND OVERNIGHT TASK LISTS

The Nursery Task Lists are to ensure that all animals at the Kitten Nursery receive care in a prompt and timely manner, and to maintain cleanliness of the facility. These procedures provide consistency and

ensure that all required tasks are completed daily. The Nursery Opening Task List is posted in the Nursery Office for reference. Staff should initial beside each task on the appropriate day when tasks are completed.

Daily tasks for nursery staff include cleaning all occupied kennels, sweeping and mopping, taking out trash, completing scheduled medications, and maintaining general cleanliness. Overnight tasks include completing medications and treatments as assigned by the shelter veterinarians. Ensuring that feedings are completed in a timely manner is the top priority of nursery staff and all other tasks must be triaged accordingly.

## HUMAN SANITATION

Due to the fragile nature of underage kittens, the Kitten Nursery has many sanitation procedures in place to protect their health. All protocols will be strictly enforced. Listed below are key steps for staff to ensure the health of the large population of kittens who are onsite. It is important that staff ensure that all volunteers and interns are following these steps in adherence with their training.

- Hand washing is the number one way to prevent the spread of disease. Wash hands at the beginning of each shift, and in between feeding each litter of kittens. Scrub all surfaces of hands, including underneath fingernails, and your forearms up to the elbow.
- Wear a new pair of gloves when handling a litter of kittens. Dispose of gloves when finished with the litter.
- Be careful to not handle kittens and anything in their kennel that may be contaminated and then handle clean supplies or food. Never handle clean supplies or food while wearing dirty gloves.
- Wear a clean smock or t-shirt when handling a litter of kittens. After handling a litter, dispose of the dirty smock or t-shirt in the dirty laundry bin.
- If you come into direct contact with feces, urine, or vomit, thoroughly wash hands or affected area prior to handling future kittens or groups of kittens.
- Never enter the Nursery Kitchen/Office area while wearing a dirty smock or t-shirt unless retrieving a kitten from an incubator, returning a kitten to an incubator, or cleaning the kitten's incubator. Dirty gloves should also never be worn in the kitchen except when returning a kitten to an incubator. A fresh pair of gloves may be worn into the kitchen in order to transport extremely soiled dishes and supplies.
- Hand sanitizer is provided in the nursery for additional pathogen control. Hand sanitizer should always be used in conjunction with washing hands and not as a replacement. Hand washing is always the best hand sanitation method.

## SECTION 2: INTAKE

The physical animal intake process at the Kitten Nursery has clear guidelines set in place to ensure the health and safety of the overall population of animals. Those staff that will be completing the intake process should be trained in medical and behavioral evaluation as well as infectious disease transmission and control. The admittance of a new animal must be approved beforehand by the overseeing staff member. Kitten Nursery admittance is based on kennel availability, kitten age, medical

conditions and behavior.

## INTAKE EXAMS

Kitten Nursery Caregivers are responsible for conducting an initial basic medical and behavioral evaluation on new animals being brought into the Kitten Nursery upon their arrival and prior to the animals being kenneled. These evaluations are only to be conducted by trained staff. These evaluations are intended to supplement, but not replace, any needed veterinary examinations.

The below processes must be completed at the time of intake and all information should be recorded on the LAAS shelter paperwork for each individual cat/kitten:

- Verify the intake date, time, impounding shelter, shelter ID numbers, and the total number of kittens in the litter.
- Assess the animal's behavior prior to removal from the carrier or trap.
- Scan for microchip and look for other identification. If found, document on paperwork.
- If able, complete a brief hands-on physical exam, noting any abnormalities.
  - Confirm age.
  - Confirm gender.
  - Check body condition.
  - Check hydration.
  - Check mobility.
  - Examine coat, mouth, ears, eyes, anus, and genitals for any signs of illness or injury.
- Give/ schedule the following medications based on their age. Fipronil should only be given if no flea treatment was given at the shelter, or if live fleas are noted:
  - Kittens 0-2 Weeks: Fipronil spray (single spray)
  - Kittens 2-4 Weeks: Fipronil spray (single spray), Panacur (scheduled 0.05cc PO SID x 5 days), Pyrantel (0.1cc PO single dose)
  - Kittens 4-8 Weeks: Fipronil spray (single spray), Panacur (scheduled 0.3cc PO SID x 5 days), FVRCP vaccine, Pyrantel (0.2cc PO single dose), Droncit (0.1cc SQ once, repeat in 2 weeks)
  - Moms: Fipronil spray (3 sprays), Pyrantel (0.6cc PO single dose), FVRCP vaccine, Droncit (0.4cc SQ once, repeat in 2 weeks)
- All kittens should also be scheduled for a Rabies vaccine at 3 months of age and an FIV/FelV SNAP test at 4 months of age.
- If kittens are 6 weeks old or younger and have similar color and appearance, staff will mark their ears with nail polish of varying colors at the time of the intake exam to assist in identifying each kitten, recording the information on their kennel cards.
- The kittens may then be kenneled in the appropriate room and fed on the next rotation (unless kittens are one week old or less – then feed immediately).

Moms will be given a full exam by a veterinarian at their convenience and receive a Rabies vaccine at that time. The only circumstance where a kitten intake exam will be permitted to be completed at a later time is in the event of a medical emergency or fading kitten upon intake. The exam will then be completed once the kitten(s) are stable. All intake exam paperwork must be returned to Admissions as soon as the exam is completed.

## SECTION 3: KITTEN DEVELOPMENT AND CARE

This section is intended to provide insight and clarity in the breakdown of age and development for nursing and orphaned kittens. This information will provide staff with clear, concise standards of care that staff and volunteers must adhere to at all times. Staff is responsible for training the volunteers and interns to help create consistency in care based on the information in this document.

### STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Kittens are broken up into three age groups listed below, dependent on their age and size.

#### Bottle Fed Kittens

Bottle fed kittens are fed milk replacer via a kitten bottle and nipple set. Their age range is typically newborn up to four weeks of age. Bottle kittens weighing under 200 grams are bottle fed every two hours throughout the day. Bottle kittens weighing over 200 grams are fed every four hours. At this age, the kittens are not old enough to regulate their body temperature, and need to be close to a heating source at all times. At this age the kittens are unable to eliminate on their own, and will need to be stimulated with each feeding. Weight gain is imperative at this age, and it is important that the kittens are weighed before and after each feeding.

#### Weaning Kittens

Kittens are in this feeding stage when they begin their transition from being bottle fed to eating normal cat food. This stage can occur from three to five weeks of age. During this stage kittens' teeth begin to erupt, and, by completion, all of the infant incisors and canines should have fully erupted. As they wean, kittens are fed gruel four times per day. A bottle with formula may be supplemented as necessary to ensure appropriate weight gain. Kittens begin to have better control of their body heat, but they still need an external heat source in their kennel. This is also the age when the kittens start to eliminate on their own, so a small litter box should be placed in their kennel for use. At this age it is important for the kittens to continue to be weighed at each feeding to ensure that they don't drop any weight as they go through the dietary transition to solid food.

#### Gruel Fed Kittens

Once kittens are able to eat on their own, they are classified as gruel fed kittens. Kittens in this state should have access to dry food and fresh water at all times. They should be fed new wet food three times a day, and weighed at least once daily. Kittens at this stage are more active and can control their own body temperature with their littermates. If a kitten is a single kitten and unable to be combined, they should be placed with an external heat source, snuggle disc, to help them maintain their body temperature. Kittens should be using the litter box consistently at this stage, and should not need any support with elimination.

### BODY WARMTH

Maintaining appropriate body temperature is extremely important for kittens less than four weeks old.

Kittens are not able to regulate their own body heat, and staff and volunteers need to proactively manage the kitten's temperature to maintain health and development.

Staff and volunteers will follow the steps outlined below to ensure kitten body heat is maintained:

- Place a heating pad on the low setting under one layer of blanket. Make sure you can feel sufficient warmth through the blanket.
- If no heating pad is available or if a kitten needs to be transported, use a heated snuggle disc placed underneath one layer of blanket or inside a warmie cover.
  - Cold snuggle discs are heated for 5 minutes in the microwave. Snuggle discs should never be reheated while warm.
  - Snuggle discs should be removed at each feeding and checked for warmth.
  - Never place a kitten directly on an uncovered snuggle disc or heating pad.
- There should be a space in the kennel where the kittens can go if they get too hot. Take care that the kittens cannot get too far away, and that nothing obstructs their path to the heat from the snuggle disc.
- Check the bedding in the kennel at each feeding to be sure it is dry; change if wet. Wet or damp bedding can chill the kittens in spite of their having a heat source in the kennel.
- If kittens are wet or soiled, dry them gently with a paper towel. If needed, follow the bathing kitten protocol listed in Section 3: Bathing.
- If a kitten feels cold, inspect to determine if it is fading. If so, immediately begin the fading kitten protocol listed in Section 8: Medical and Animal Health.
- If a kitten becomes chilled while feeding, warm it before continuing. Kittens might stop eating if they are cold.
- Milk should be warm so that the kitten does not become chilled. Kittens cannot properly digest food when they are cold, so reheat if it gets cold.

## WEIGHT GAIN

Staff is responsible for ensuring the growth of kittens in the Kitten Nursery each day. Kittens should gain weight each day, approximately 10-15 grams. Kittens should be weighed before and after every feeding with a small scale in grams. Weaned kittens should be weighed once every other day. Kittens who are nursing with mothers should also be weighed once every other day to ensure weight gain is appropriate to size. Staff is responsible for monitoring each kitten's weight gain on their feeding chart or in the weight tracker if not on the feeding rotation.

Lack of weight gain in a 24-hour period for a kitten is a cause for concern, and the kitten should be closely monitored by staff for any signs or symptoms of illness that may be causing the stagnancy in development. Weight loss is cause for alarm, and staff should ensure the kitten is eating by tube or syringe feeding. Kittens who drop in start weight for three feedings in a row should be examined by a veterinarian.

## STIMULATION FOR URINATION AND DEFECATION

When kittens under 3 weeks of age are unable to control their own bowel and urinary habits. In a natural environment with a queen, the kittens would be regularly stimulated by the mom cat as she licks their genital region to clean them. Staff needs to emulate this process for each kitten during the daily feedings. Kittens typically need to be stimulated until they are eating food on their own. During the

feeding process bottle-fed kittens should be stimulated before each feeding. Kittens should urinate at each feeding and should defecate a minimum of once daily (24 hours). The kitten's elimination should be recorded by staff on the feeding chart for each kitten and any abnormalities should be indicated.

To stimulate a kitten, staff will gently rub the kitten on its lower abdomen, as well as the genitals and rectum with a baby wipe or paper towel. Staff will ensure to rub only enough to get the kitten to eliminate because overstimulation will irritate the area. Keep an eye out for chafing and lingering dirt and do not let the kittens get chilled during this process.

If staff is concerned about a kitten's abnormal elimination, they should record their findings on the kitten's feeding chart. Once finished with the litter, staff will reference the litter's tag color or consult ShelterLuv as necessary to determine if this is a new condition or if the kitten has been on treatment for the issue seen. If the condition is new, staff should write a Caregiver Observation to ensure the veterinarian can examine the kitten.

## LITTER BOX

Once kittens are approximately four to five weeks old, they no longer need assistance with urinating or defecating, and can do so on their own. This typically happens when the kitten reaches the weaning stage and starts eating wet and dry food independently. At this stage, staff will place a litter box in their kennel with non-clumping clay litter. The kittens will use the litter box naturally. Do not force the kitten to go into the litter box, or punish for accidents outside of the litter box. Shredded paper can be used as litter in certain circumstances as deemed necessary.

## CLEANLINESS & BATHING

Kittens need assistance keeping their fur clean to maintain kitten health and help teach good hygiene habits as they develop. It is important for staff and volunteers to help clean the kittens regularly to prevent the need for the kitten to be given a full bath. Small combs such as flea combs can be used to gently brush food or feces out of the kitten's fur. Toothbrushes can be used for very small kittens.

In the event that a kitten needs to have more in-depth cleaning than can be provided with each feeding, bathing may be necessary. Baths must be approved by either the Nursery Lead, Tier III, or Tier II Cat Caregiver. The following steps for bathing the kitten should be adhered to:

1. Gather all needed supplies: warm snuggle disc, bowl with warm water and a dab of dawn soap, bowl with warm clean water, washcloth, drying towels, and a hair dryer.
2. Put on clean t-shirt/smock and gloves.
3. Use a washcloth soaked in soapy water to wet kitten. Wet as little of the kitten as possible to avoid unnecessary hypothermia.
4. Wash all areas on the kitten that are dirty, washing the tail and bottom of the kitten last.
5. Use warm clean water to rinse all soapy water from kitten.
6. Dry kitten with a towel to absorb as much water as possible.
7. Place kitten on a dry towel, and use the hair dryer on the low setting to dry kitten. Make sure to keep the dryer moving and not let the air blow on one area for longer than a few seconds. The hair dryer must be at least 12 inches away from the kitten at all times.
8. After the fur is dry, place kitten in their cleaned suite with a warm snuggle-disc, and monitor health for signs of hypothermia for 2 hours after bathing.

## SPAY AND NEUTER

Kittens must meet the following requirements to qualify to be spayed or neutered for adoption.

- Must be a minimum weight of 1.75 pounds for males, and 1.8 pounds for females, and a minimum of six weeks of age.
- Must be cleared by veterinarian of all infectious diseases.
- Animals on medications must be cleared by veterinarian prior to surgery.

Once kittens have met all of the above requirements, staff will enter the kittens' names into the Spay/Neuter Surgery document. Cat team staff is responsible for moving kittens into the clinic the morning of surgery.

## SECTION 4: ORPHANED KITTEN FEEDING

Staff is responsible for ensuring that all cats in the care of the Kitten Nursery are fed according to the protocols listed below. Volunteers and interns are permitted to assist with the feeding procedures for orphaned kittens but special training should be given to interns and volunteers to assure that the appropriate information is passed along for continuity in feeding schedules and care.

Staff is also responsible for providing special food to animals that may have different dietary needs. A sign on the suite will indicate any special diets to be fed in the accordance with a veterinarian.

Cats should be fed according to the protocols below.

### FEEDING PROTOCOL FOR MOTHERLESS KITTENS

Week 1 (weighing 0-200 grams): Bottle Feeding

- Food: Kitten Milk Replacer formula
- Frequency: Every two hours
- Stimulate to eliminate

Week 2 (weighing 200-500 grams): Bottle Feeding

- Food type: Kitten Milk Replacer formula
- Frequency: Every four hours
- Stimulate to eliminate

Week 3-4: Weaning Stage

- Food type: Kitten Milk Replacer formula, gruel, and water
- Frequency: Fresh gruel and formula (if needed) 4 times a day
- Gruel and water should be in kennel at all times. Gruel and formula should be fed at station.

Week 5-6: Weaned Stage and Kitten Mothers

- Food type: Gruel, dry kibble, and water
- Frequency: Fresh gruel offered three times daily
- Dry kibble, gruel, and water must be in kennel at all times

## FORMULA PREPARATION

Staff must prepare formula several times daily, and it must always be available in the refrigerator in the kitchen of the Kitten Nursery. Formula should be prepared with one part powder to two parts water. Staff must follow these steps to prepare formula:

1. Obtain a blender bottle from the nursery kitchen cupboard. The blender bottle should consist of a bottle, lid, and round whisk.
2. Remove the whisk from the bottle and set aside on a clean, sanitized surface (such as back in the cupboard).
3. Fill the bottle with KMR powder to the fill line indicated on the blender bottle (to 333 mL).
4. Fill the remainder of the bottle with warm water up to the fill line on the blender bottle (up to 1000 mL, including the KMR powder).
5. Add one scoop of TummyWorks probiotic powder.
6. Place the round whisk into the blender bottle.
7. Make sure the lid is screwed on securely, and that the pop-top lid is secure.
8. Shake the bottle vigorously until the formula is thoroughly mixed. Check for lumps in the formula. If lumps are present, shake the bottle more.
9. Place the blender bottle in the nursery kitchen refrigerator and mark the time it was made on the whiteboard on the refrigerator door.

Mixed formula lasts for 24 hours (refrigerated) once mixed. Any formula older than 24 hours should be discarded.

## GRUEL PREPARATION

Staff will prepare gruel several times daily to feed kittens on a gruel diet. Staff will follow the following procedure to prepare gruel:

1. Gather several cans of canned wet food. Open all cans, and dish out into a large, stainless steel bowl.
2. Add a small amount of water to the bowl. Always add a small amount, and you can add more water later if the gruel is too thick.
3. Add one scoop of TummyWorks probiotic powder for every six 5.5oz cans of food.
4. Use the immersion blender on the low setting to mix the canned food and water together. Wait to turn the blender on until the head of the blender is immersed in the gruel. Removing the immersion blender head while it is still running causes splatter.
5. Continue to mix until the gruel reaches a thick, milkshake consistency. This consistency ensures the kittens are getting enough water in their diet while giving them proper nutrition. If the gruel is too thick or thin, add water or more canned food accordingly until it reaches the proper consistency.
6. Clean the immersion blender head immediately to prevent rust and corrosion.

## BOTTLE FEEDING

Neonatal kittens without moms will need to be bottle fed until they are ready to be weaned and eat on their own. The only milk replacement that is approved for use in the nursery is PetAg's Kitten Milk Replacer (KMR). Changing formula brands can cause gastrointestinal illness, and may only be done with

the direct approval of the Nursery Lead or Cat Care Manager in conjunction with a veterinarian.

### **Bottle Feeding Steps**

When staff is bottle feeding a litter of kittens, they will follow the protocol below:

1. Wash your hands with soap up to your elbows.
2. Restart the timer of the litter you are about to feed
3. Get a scale bowl
4. Collect all clean supplies needed (mug & hot water, funnel, measuring cup & milk, gruel, etc) and place in scale bowl
5. Take scale bowl to your clean station and place supplies on station
6. Grab about one baby wipe per kitten you are about to feed. More than one baby wipe per kitten may be necessary for weaning kittens who are extremely messy
7. Put on gloves
8. Collect your bin making sure not to place it on your station. Get out all needed supplies and put bin away. Get feeding charts
9. Put on feeding shirt and fill your bottle. Float the bottle in the hot water for about a minute
10. Remove kitten to feed from suite, taking note of the coat color and/or nail polish marker on ears to ensure you have the right kitten.
11. Stimulate the kitten to urinate and defecate over a trashcan with a paper towel or wet wipe by gently rubbing the kitten's genitals and lower abdomen. Record output on feeding sheet. Notate any abnormal findings.
12. Turn on the scale on and weigh the kitten. Notate start weight on feeding sheet. If start weight is lower than previous start weight from the last feeding, draw a circle around the weight on the sheet. If the weight drops for three consecutive feedings, alert Nursery Lead and medical staff.
13. Place the kitten on a soft surface such as on top of the swaddle blanket on the tabletop.
14. Test the temperature of the milk by squeezing the bottle and dripping some formula on the inside of the wrist. The milk should be body temperature, or slightly warmer.
15. Test the flow of the nipple by turning the bottle upside down. The nipple should drip slowly when gently squeezed. If the nipple allows too much milk flow it can cause aspiration.
16. Feed the kitten with stomach facing downward, similar to how they would naturally nurse from their mother. Never feed kitten on its back, as this may cause aspiration.
17. Place the nipple in the kitten's mouth and gently position the kitten's head upward with your available hand, placing fingers on either side of their head like a headband or earmuffs. Tilt the bottle downward at a 45 degree angle to ensure the kitten is drinking milk and not pockets of air.
18. If the kitten is being fussy or too frantic, you can wrap the kitten in a swaddle blanket like a burrito (or "purrito"), but always remember to keep the kitten upright and never on their back to feed.
19. Weigh your kitten to determine to end weight. Make sure the kitten gained enough weight according to the feeding reference on the table. If they have not gained the appropriate amount, try to feed them one more time. If they are still not drinking, follow the procedure for tube feeding.
20. Record all notes on the feeding chart.
21. Make sure the kitten's face and fur are clean and dry. Dried milk on the skin can cause

infections, and wet fur can cause hypothermia.

22. Promptly place the kitten back into the warm environment of their suite or aqua.
23. Repeat steps 10-22 for each kitten in the litter, re-warming the bottle in the mug if necessary.

### **Cleaning After Feeding**

1. After feeding all kittens in the suite, place the feeding charts back on the aqua or suite door, making sure the first feeding chart is on top.
2. Remove the feeding t-shirt or smock. If the t-shirt/smock or swaddle blanket is soiled, toss it in the dirty laundry bin and replace with a new one. If they are clean, they can be reused. Fold the t-shirt and swaddle blanket neatly, and place in the suite's bin with the marker.
3. Place the bottle back into the mug, and place the mug in the scale bowl.
4. Remove your gloves.
5. Carry the scale bowl with the mug and bottle inside into the kitchen, and place the scale bowl in the sink. Make sure to never place the mug or the bottle on the surface of the sink, as this causes cross contamination.
6. Clean the bottle with hot water, and shake to remove any debris. The bottle can be cleaned with a bottle brush located in the suite's feeding bin if residue is difficult to remove. Make sure the nipple is clean as well.
7. Dump the water from the mug and return the mug, bottle, and nipple back to the suite's feeding bin. Make sure the bottle and nipple are separate so they can air dry and not cause mold or bacterial growth.
8. Return to the kitchen and clean the scale bowl with dawn and hot water, removing any and all debris. If a sponge needs to be used, use the silicone scrubber.
9. Place the scale bowl in the tub of Rescue disinfectant in the kitchen. If a silicone scrubber was used, place that in the tub of Rescue as well. Set the timer for the Rescue bin for five minutes.
10. Return to your feeding station and spray the station with dilute Dawn solution. Wipe immediately with clean paper towels.
11. Saturate the station with Rescue disinfectant, covering all areas including the scale, outside of the napkin dispenser, tabletop, and chair. Set the timer for your feeding station to let the Rescue solution sit for five minutes.
12. While you are waiting for the Rescue to finish sitting, help with small chores around the nursery such as folding laundry, doing dishes, folding litter boxes, stocking supplies, or sweeping.
13. After the five minutes have elapsed for your scale bowl in the kitchen, remove the scale bowl and rinse with water. Place on the drying rack to dry.
14. After the five minutes have elapsed for your feeding station, wipe down all surfaces with a clean paper towel until dry.

### **TUBE FEEDING**

If a kitten refuses to drink, a trained staff member may choose to tube feed. The decision to tube feed can only be made by trained staff, and the decision should be handled professionally. If done incorrectly, tube feeding can cause damage to the kitten's esophagus and the stomach lining, and if the tube goes down the wrong way, the kitten's lungs can fill with fluid, and can cause pneumonia or even death. Staff should make all efforts to encourage the kitten to drink before tube feeding, unless directed by medical staff to tube feed at every feeding. Tube feeding should only be done on kittens younger than 4 weeks of age. Once a kitten's premolars have begun to erupt, syringe feeding gruel should be substituted for

tube feeding. It is possible for kittens to chew through the tube, resulting in foreign body ingestion that may not be able to be resolved. Volunteers and interns are not permitted to tube feed.

When tube feeding, staff should follow the same protocol to prepare the feeding area and formula for the kitten being tube fed. The following steps should be adhered to in order to limit the possible negative effects to tube feeding.

1. Obtain a French red rubber catheter (size 3.5 for kittens two weeks or less, and size 5 for kittens older than two weeks) and a 10cc syringe.
2. Measure the tube by placing the end of the French rubber catheter on the last rib and following the natural curve of the kitten's esophagus to the mouth opening. Flex the kitten's head forward, as they would be when drinking from their mother. Mark the location of the mouth opening on the tube with a sharpie.
3. Place the French rubber catheter on the 10cc syringe.
4. Reference the Kitten Feeding Chart Reference at the feeding station to determine how much to tube feed.
5. Wrap the kitten in a swaddle blanket to ensure their paws do not swat the tube out of their mouth. Make sure the kitten is upright at all times.
6. Place the end of the French rubber catheter in the kitten's mouth, and guide the tube along the roof of the kitten's mouth. Guide the tube all the way down until mark on the sharpie reaches the kitten's mouth. If the tube does not slide down easily or gives any resistance, pull the tube out and try again. If the kitten is coughing or gagging, remove the tube immediately and try again. If the kitten is crying or vocalizing, that is a good sign that you have the tube in the esophagus and not the trachea. If you are relatively new to tube feeding, or are unsure whether the tube is properly placed, test with a small amount of water or sterile saline prior to using milk.
7. Slowly depress the syringe to fill the kitten's stomach with milk. If you see milk coming out of the kitten's nose or if they start coughing or gagging, remove the tube immediately and turn the kitten face downward to couplege the kitten to remove as much milk from their airways as possible. If this occurs, alert medical staff.
8. After all the milk has been tubed into the kitten's stomach, kink the tube and gently pull out the tube. Kinking the tube prevents any milk from entering the trachea upon removal.

Staff should ensure to not inject more formula than the kitten's stomach capacity. Doing so can cause the kitten to regurgitate the milk, and aspirate the formula. Staff should weigh the kitten prior to feeding and use weight to determine the correct amount of formula to feed to avoid that complication. Injecting the formula too rapidly can also cause aspiration of formula.

Staff must record all tube feedings on the kitten's feeding chart.

## **WEANING KITTENS**

Orphaned kittens will begin the weaning stages of development around the time frame that their teeth begin to erupt from the gum-line, which is between three to four weeks of age. The kittens will begin to bite at the bottle nipple and will suckle less, but still have a strong appetite. This is an indicator to staff to start the transition to the weaning stage of development. Once kittens have transitioned over to the

weaning stage, they should have access to fresh water and gruel in their kennels at all times. Weaning kittens should be offered and fed warm fresh gruel every 6 hours. If a kitten is not eating enough gruel, bottle can be used to supplement until the kitten is weaned.

### **Transitioning Kitten Steps**

When staff are feeding a litter of weaning kittens, they will follow the protocol below:

1. Wash your hands with soap up to your elbows.
2. Restart the timer of the litter you are about to feed
3. Get a scale bowl
4. Collect all clean supplies needed (mug & hot water, funnel, measuring cup & milk, gruel, etc) and place in scale bowl
5. Take scale bowl to your clean station and place supplies on station
6. Grab about one baby wipe per kitten you are about to feed. More than one baby wipe per kitten may be necessary for weaning kittens who are extremely messy
7. Put on gloves
8. Collect your bin making sure not to place it on your station. Get out all needed supplies and put bin away. Get feeding charts
9. Put on feeding shirt and fill your bottle. Float the bottle in the hot water for about a minute
10. Remove kitten to feed from suite, taking note of the coat color and/or nail polish marker on ears to ensure you have the right kitten.
11. If a kitten is reliably using the litterbox, there is no need to stimulate. If a kitten still needs stimulation, stimulate the kitten to urinate and defecate over a trashcan with a paper towel or wet wipe by gently rubbing the kitten's genitals and lower abdomen. Record output on feeding sheet. Notate any abnormal findings.
12. Turn on the scale and weigh the kitten. Notate start weight on feeding sheet. If start weight is lower than previous start weight from the last feeding, draw a circle around the weight on the sheet. If the weight drops for three consecutive feedings, alert Nursery Lead and medical staff.
13. Place the kitten on a soft surface such as on top of the swaddle blanket on the tabletop.
14. Offer the kitten the warmed gruel with a spoon or by placing the food tray under the kitten's nose. If the kitten is uninterested, gently place some gruel in the kitten's mouth with a spoon or a gloved finger so they can taste the food. Sometimes a kitten just needs to taste it and starts eating. Encourage the kitten to eat gruel, but do not take too long (more than 2 minutes) trying to get them to eat.
15. If the kitten eats enough gruel on their own and gains the adequate amount according to the feeding reference, skip to step 24.
16. If the kitten refuses the gruel, the bottle can be offered to supplement.
17. Test the temperature of the milk by squeezing the bottle and dripping some formula on the inside of the wrist. The milk should be body temperature, or slightly warmer.
18. Test the flow of the nipple by turning the bottle upside down. The nipple should drip slowly when gently squeezed. If the nipple allows too much milk flow it can cause aspiration.
19. Feed the kitten with stomach facing downward, similar to how they would naturally nurse from their mother. Never feed kitten on its back, as this may cause aspiration.
20. Place the nipple in the kitten's mouth and gently position the kitten's head upward with your available hand, placing fingers on either side of their head like a headband or earmuffs. Tilt the

bottle downward at a 45 degree angle to ensure the kitten is drinking milk and not pockets of air.

21. If the kitten is being fussy or too frantic, you can wrap the kitten in a swaddle blanket like a burrito (or “purrito”), but always remember to keep the kitten upright and never on their back to feed.
22. Weigh your kitten to determine to end weight. Make sure the kitten gained enough weight according to the feeding reference on the table. If they have not gained the appropriate amount, try to feed them one more time. If they are still not drinking, follow the procedure for tube feeding.
23. Record all notes on the feeding chart.
24. Make sure the kitten’s face and fur are clean and dry. Dried milk or gruel on the skin can cause infections, and wet fur can cause hypothermia.
25. Promptly place the kitten back into the warm environment of their suite or aqua.
26. Repeat steps 12-28 for each kitten in the litter, re-warming the bottle in the mug if necessary.

## **WEANED KITTENS**

Once kittens are eating food consistently on their own, they will be classified as weaned gruel eaters. This process can start as early as four weeks of age, but each kitten should be independently eating by six weeks old. Once kittens are classified as weaned they should have access to fresh water, gruel, and dry food in their kennels at all times. Independent kittens should be offered fresh wet food three times daily.

The feeding of weaned kittens should be done in conjunction with the daily animal care cleaning. Following the steps listed in Section 6: Animal Care, staff is to ensure that fresh dry food is replaced as needed and wet food offered according to the feeding schedule.

## **SYRINGE FEEDING**

Some kittens will not take easily to bottle feeding or gruel. Kittens rely on scent, instinct, and their mother to guide them to proper feeding. Always try to let the kitten eat on its own first; if a kitten is not eating a sufficient amount on its own, or is not eating at all, then supplementing with syringe feeding is appropriate. Weaning kittens are susceptible to becoming syringe dependent if they learn to associate the syringe with food. Care should be taken not to allow kittens to become syringe dependent, as it will hinder the weaning process and the kitten’s overall health.

### **Syringe Feeding Steps**

1. Prepare the gruel as normal, ensuring that the consistency is smooth enough for the syringe
2. Use a 1cc or 3cc syringe to draw up gruel.
3. Place syringe tip at the side of the kitten’s mouth between their teeth. Do not aim too far in the back of the mouth as this can cause gagging or aspiration. Do not feed towards the front of the mouth, as this may confuse the kitten thinking it is a nipple.
4. Squirt a small amount of gruel in the back region of the kitten’s mouth.
5. Do not count how many syringes or how many milliliters the kitten is syringed, as kittens do not swallow all the gruel. Always rely on grams in weight gained to ensure the kitten is getting enough gruel.
6. Repeat as needed until the kitten has gained enough weight in accordance with the feeding

reference.

### **ALTERNATIVE WET FOOD OPTIONS**

On occasion, the nursery will receive donations of different brands of food than what is normally fed to gruel eating kittens. These food options are often more palatable and can encourage kittens to eat solid foods when they are refusing the normal brand of wet food. Examples of alternative wet food offerings include Royal Canin Kitten, Purina ProPlan Kitten, Fancy Feast Kitten, and human baby food. Human baby food must always be served in conjunction with a formulated cat or kitten food, as baby food does not have the vitamins, minerals, and nutrients kittens need to thrive. Alternative food can be offered to help with the weaning process or once all attempts have been made to encourage the kitten to eat regular gruel. Only staff members can approve the use of alternative food.

## **SECTION 5: KITTENS AND NURSING MOTHERS**

Kittens have a better chance at survival if they are able to stay with their mothers. However, queens are more susceptible to disease in a stressful environment and are more likely to reject their young. It is important to limit traffic in the areas housing nursing mothers and to keep the mothers as comfortable as possible.

### **NURSING MOTHER CARE**

Nursing queens should have access to dry food, gruel, and fresh water at all times. If the nursing mother is hungry or eats all of the offered food they should be given more wet food to maintain their appetite. Nursing cats are feeding their young and need to consume more food on a daily basis than they normally would otherwise. To ensure that the queens are getting enough nutrients and food, staff is responsible for weighing friendly and handleable nursing moms once weekly. This weight should be recorded in the weight monitoring binder. Working cats should not have any forced handling and will not be weighed weekly.

### **NURSING KITTENS**

Kittens should nurse for a minimum of four weeks to ensure maximum growth and development. The relationship with the mother cat is very important to the development of the kitten. The kittens will observe the queen and mimic their activity. This is a very helpful process for natural weaning as kittens will mimic their mother and try eating as they observe her eat food.

### **WEANING KITTENS WITH MOTHERS**

The weaning process for nursing kittens varies depending on when queen naturally chooses to separate from her litter. Some queens will allow kittens to nurse until they are eight weeks of age or older and in some situations the mother cat will push away from her kittens once they are old enough to eat on their own and survive without her. When the mother cats no longer want to be with their offspring they will become restless and agitated with around and interacting with the kittens. They may hiss or swat if the kittens approach. When kittens are weaned or when mothers become agitated by them, the kittens should be separated from mom.

## **SEPARATION**

Removing kittens from their mother is a decision that should be taken very seriously and only authorized by a veterinarian or the Cat Manager, Cat Team Leads, based on a medical or behavioral need. Kittens should be separated from their mothers at 6 weeks of age, provided that they are healthy and gaining weight. Staff is not permitted to separate kittens under four weeks of age from their mother cat without getting permission from either the veterinarian, Cat Manager, or Cat Team Leads.

## **SECTION TBD: PUPPIES - WILL ADD FOR 2018/2019 SEASON**

## **SECTION 6: ANIMAL CARE**

This section is intended to provide instruction into BFAS – LA cleaning protocols for the Kitten Nursery cat housing areas.

### **KENNEL SET UP**

It is the responsibility of all staff assigned to animal care to provide safe, adequate housing for every animal in our care at all times. This includes providing kenneling of appropriate size for animals, and that kennels are set up in a manner conducive to the overall physical and mental health of the animals.

All occupied cat kennels have a standard kennel set up to facilitate providing the cat with maximum space and ease of access to needed resources. Each kennel should have a cardboard litter box, two stainless steel bowls with food and water, a fleece blanket, and either a cat bed or an additional folded fleece blanket.

### **Aquariums**

When kittens weigh less than 200 grams, the kittens should be confined into an aquarium. The aquarium should have enough space that all kittens can move away from the heat source but easily move back if needed. The aquarium must have a heat source, underneath only one layer of thin fleece blanket. Always check to see if the temperature of the heating pad can be felt through the blanket. The kittens also must have one medium sized stuffed comfort animal. Toys are not beneficial for kittens at this age.

### **Bottle Kittens in Suites**

For older bottle feeder kittens, no litter box is needed. The bottom of the kennel should be lined with a dry fleece blanket. A heat source should be placed in the back of the kennel covered with only one layer of fleece blanket. Always check to see if the temperature of the heat source can be felt through the blanket. One large sized stuffed comfort animal is placed beside the heating source to resemble a mother. Kittens are becoming curious and learning how to play at this age, so small toys may be beneficial.

### **Weaning Kitten**

The bottom of the kennel should be lined with a clean dry fleece blanket. A heating pad is placed in the suite under one layer of thin fleece blanket. The heating pad must be set on low. Always check to see if

the temperature of the heating pad can be felt through the blanket. The low edged cardboard litter tray should be placed in the back of the kennel with a small amount of non-clumping clay litter. A low edged stainless steel dish with fresh water and a gruel tray must be in the kennel at all times. A stuffed comfort toy and toys can be placed in these suites for enrichment.

### **Weaned and Nursing Mothers Kittens**

The bottom of the kennel is lined with a fleece blanket or towel, and a large cat bed. The suite must contain a cardboard litter box with a thin layer of non-clumping clay litter, a stainless steel bowl of dry food, a stainless steel bowl of water, and fresh trays of gruel. A bowl holder should be used for water. A comfort toy, a small cardboard box, cut paper towel rolls, and toys can be used for enrichment. Unless the kittens are very young (10 days or less) a white kennel insert may be placed in the suite for enrichment.

Queens and their litters must be observed closely to ensure the kittens are being well cared for and are gaining weight appropriately. Any kittens that are observed not thriving may be placed on the feeding rotation and fed by staff.

### **CLEANING OCCUPIED CAGES**

Kittens should stay inside the kennel while it is being cleaned. If it is extremely difficult to clean around the kittens, they can be placed in a bin temporarily until cleaning of their kennel is finished. Always wear gloves and a t-shirt or smock when cleaning cat kennels and change gloves between cages. Rescue should never be sprayed into an occupied kennel. Please note: never handle cleaning supplies and/or central animal care supplies while wearing dirty gloves. Gloves need to be clean or removed prior to handling any centralized supplies that are shared between cat kennels.

- 1.

#### **Step-By-Step Cleaning Procedures**

1. Collect and prepare all age-appropriate supplies needed: blankets, wet food in paper tray, litter, litter box, toys, etc
2. Put on new pair of gloves and a new t-shirt
3. Remove bowls, toys, and other supplies from kennel. Place any supplies that can be reused on your feeding station (or in a clean litter box if cleaning the kennel of a kitten not on the feeding rotation).
4. Remove blankets from kennel. Shake litter and debris from blankets into the trashcan, making sure not to touch the blanket to the trash. If blankets can be reused, set aside on feeding station or inside clean litter box. If soiled, put in laundry bin.
5. Remove the kitten's dirty litter box and hold it at the edge of the kennel. With your other hand, brush any litter or dry debris into the litter box, making sure not to get any debris into the kennel below or onto the floor.
6. With a rag pre-soaked in Rescue wipe out kennel and remove all organic matter and debris from kennel surfaces including the kennel bars and handle.
7. Return blankets and toys to kennel. If a heating pad is present, place one layer of blanket over the heating pad and feel for warmth.

8. Refill food and water dishes, remembering not to touch shared supplies with dirty gloves or hands.
9. Return food and water bowls to kennel. Place litter box in kennel.
- 1.

### **DISINFECTING EMPTY CAGES (DEEP CLEANING)**

Always wear gloves and a t-shirt when cleaning cat kennels and change gloves between cages. Please note: never handle cleaning supplies and/or central animal care supplies while wearing dirty gloves. Gloves need to be clean or removed prior to handling any centralized supplies that are 'shared' between cat kennels. (It can be helpful to pre-soak cleaning cloths with Rescue to assist with efficiency in cleaning).

Empty kennels requiring disinfecting will be notated with a "Deep Clean Please" sign.

1. Remove all items from the kennel
2. Remove any loose debris from the cage and ensure debris goes directly into the trashcan and not on the floor.
3. Clean all organic matter from all surfaces of the suite with dilute Dawn solution.
4. Clean cage door by scrubbing lightly with dilute Dawn solution until all debris is removed including the handle to the cage and the plastic kennel card holder.
5. Spray the entirety of the suite with dilute Dawn solution and wipe down cage walls, bottom, top, handle and outside frame, removing all organic material in kennel.
6. Saturate all areas of the suite with Rescue disinfectant. Allow to sit for five minutes.
7. Wipe out all surfaces until they are clean and dry.
8. When finished with a kennel make sure all contaminated paper towels and gloves are placed directly in the garbage can.
9. Initial and place a "Ready for New Kitty" sign on the clean kennel.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPLY DISINFECTING PROCEDURES**

There are supplies that are used during kitten care at different stages of development. These supplies listed below and staff should adhere to the following procedures when cleaning. Continuity in cleaning procedures will assist in preventing spread of disease. Staff should pay close attention to the usage of gloves in these listed procedures.

### **LAUNDRY**

Washing and drying laundry is a task that is performed around the clock at Best Friends to keep up with the supply of dirty laundry we create. The nursery laundry is stored, washed, and dried separately from the main facility's laundry and should always be labeled during each laundry process to ensure it does not get lost. Always wear a new pair of gloves and a protective t-shirt or smock when handling dirty laundry.

### **HEATING PADS**

Heating pads should be cleaned with care to ensure they are not damaged.

### Step-by-Step Cleaning Procedure

1. Place heating pad on a towel or clean surface
2. Spray thoroughly with Rescue, saturating the pad as well as the cord (excluding the plug)
3. Allow to sit for 5 minutes
4. Wipe pad and cord with a rag or paper towel, making sure all debris has been removed

### DISHES, TOYS, AND OTHER WASHABLE SUPPLIES

When removing dirty items from a cat housing area they should be cleaned promptly and not left to soak or sit for any extended period of time. Bacteria can grow inside stagnant dishes and it is very important to limit the risk of disease exposure by promptly cleaning and disinfecting all dishes at the time they are no longer in use.

### Step-By-Step Washing Procedure

- 1.
2. All dishes should be wiped of loose debris and any remnant debris should be removed into a trash can prior to cleaning.
3. In the sink, mechanically scrub off all organic material with a silicone scrubber.
4. rinse with water.
5. Completely submerge dish in Rescue sanitation bin for at least five minutes.
6. Use water and clean hands to rinse excess disinfectant
7. Place to dry on drying rack.
8. Once dry, promptly put away.

### DAILY CLEANING TASKS

To ensure the health of the animals in our care, the staff will be responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the Kitten Nursery. Staff should always reference the most up to date opening and closing checklists for reference. The following tasks should be completed every day:

- Clean office and common areas
- Clean kitchen: change dish drying towel, disinfect sink and all surface areas including the refrigerator and water dispenser, refill Rescue bins, dish buckets and jugs
- Dump and refill mop bucket with Rescue. Sweep and mop entire nursery. Move desks to clean underneath and around feeding stations.
- Feed and clean suites of kittens and moms not on feeding rotation.in Gruel City and Queen Castle
- Empty all trash cans and take out garbage to the dumpster.
- Complete nursery laundry.

## SECTION 8: ANIMAL HEALTH

This section is intended to provide insight and clarity in to BFAS LA animal health procedures. It is also intended to explain the scope and scale of what Best Friends is able to provide medically, and when other agencies need to be involved.

## **MEDICATING**

Staff is responsible for ensuring all animals in BFAS LA's care receive any and all medication and treatments as prescribed by a veterinarian. Medication dosing and prescriptions may only be done by the staff veterinarian. Trained interns are permitted to assist with oral, injectable and topical medications, under the supervision of staff.

## **FELINE VACCINATION AND PREVENTIVE PROTOCOL**

Kitten Nursery staff are responsible for making sure kittens receive vaccinations and preventatives at the time of intake and the day they are due in the case of booster vaccinations and treatments, and will maintain medical records. Shelter Luv must be kept accurate and up to date at all times in addition to paper records.

Vaccines

### **FVRCP - Feline Rhinotracheitis virus, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia Virus**

Kittens should not be vaccinated any younger than four weeks of age or prior to the full eruption of all of their canine teeth. For kittens in a litter, all kittens in litter must have full eruption of their deciduous (baby) canine teeth. If kittens have been onsite for 4 weeks, administer vaccinations whether or not canine teeth have fully erupted. As long as a kitten is of age, they will receive their first vaccination upon intake and will receive booster vaccinations every 14 days until 18 weeks of age. For kittens who are not of age to receive vaccinations upon intake, staff will be responsible for scheduling those vaccines when they would be due based on their intake age. Vaccines for kittens under 16 weeks are scheduled or completed as "FVRCP Kitten." When the last vaccine of the kitten series is given, change the vaccine type to "FVRCP."

All adults should be vaccinated on intake, entered in Shelter Luv as "FVRCP Initial". If there is clear vaccine history from LAAS, then the second dose can be scheduled 14 days from their dose as "Adult Annual Vaccine".

### **Rabies Vaccine**

Kittens should be vaccinated for rabies once they reach 12 weeks of age.

Adult cats should be vaccinated during the Vet Intake Exam by the veterinarian with staff assistance. If the cat has a valid rabies certificate verifying the rabies vaccination was given, no rabies vaccine will be needed until the expiration date listed upon the rabies certificate.

### **Dewormers**

#### **Pyrantel (Strongid)**

All friendly adult cats or kittens over two weeks of age should be given pyrantel as a preventative dewormer upon intake. For kittens who are not of age to receive dewormer upon intake, staff will be responsible for scheduling that medication when they would be due based on their intake age. Pyrantel is dispensed as 0.1cc per pound.

Pyrantel is used for the following parasites in dogs, and while it is not FDA approved for use in cats, it is useful for similar parasites and is considered safe to use (Plumbs's Veterinary Drug Handbook) - Ascarids

(*Toxocara canis*, *T. leonina*), hookworms (*Ancylostoma caninum*, *Uncinaria stenocephala*), and stomach worms (*Physaloptera*).

### **Panacur (fenbendazole)**

All adult cats or kittens over two weeks of age should be given Panacur as a preventative dewormer upon intake. For kittens who are not of age to receive dewormer upon intake, staff will be responsible for scheduling that medication when they would be due based on their intake age.

Fenbendazole is indicated for the treatment of ascarids (*Toxocara canis*, *T. leonina*), hookworms (*Ancylostoma caninum*, *Uncinaria stenocephala*), whipworms (*Trichuris vulpis*), and tapeworms (*Taenia pisiformis*) in dogs. Although not FDA-approved, fenbendazole has also been used in cats for similar parasites (Plumb's Veterinary Drug Handbook). This drug is off label use for Giardia.

### **Droncit (praziquantel)**

All kittens 4 weeks of age or older should receive Droncit as a tapeworm preventative. Dosing for Droncit is 0.1cc for kittens and 0.4cc for moms.

Praziquantel is indicated for the treatment of tapeworms (*Dipylidium caninum*, *Taenia taeniaeformis*) in cats

### **Flea Treatment**

#### **Fipronil (Frontline)**

Fipronil is used as a flea treatment and preventative and should be given to all kittens regardless of age (unless flea treatment was given at an LAAS facility within the last 30 days). All kittens should be given one spray of fipronil between the shoulder blades. Moms receive three sprays.

## **ILLNESS IDENTIFICATION**

For new medical conditions staff should follow the procedure listed in the Vet Exams section to ensure proper reporting of medical conditions to the veterinarian. Only the staff veterinarian may start treatment and prescribe medications for cats and kittens in the Kitten Nursery program based on treatment protocols written in conjunction with the Cat Management Team.

Examples of minor medical issues that are to be documented include but are not limited to:

- Sneezing, with or without nasal discharge
- Squinting/Swelling of eyes, with or without ocular discharge
- Ocular ulcerations or discolorations
- Coughing/hacking
- Noted aspiration
- Oral ulcers
- Slight dehydration
- Excessive food or water consumption
- Broken teeth or noted dental disease
- Scabbing or old healing wounds
- Limping, not fully weight bearing on limb
- Diarrhea
- Change in attitude or behavior

- Straining to urinate or defecate
- Loss or decrease in appetite for less than 12 hours
- Suckling on littermates

## **VETERINARY EXAMS**

BFAS LA has several staff veterinarians who work with program animals. There is typically a veterinarian available every day of the week. The veterinarian will examine all animals coming into the Kitten Nursery program and oversee the medical care and needs for those animals. Only the staff veterinarian may start treatment and prescribe medications for cats and kittens in the Kitten Nursery program based on treatment protocols written in conjunction with the Senior Veterinarian.

### **Caregiver Observations**

The staff veterinarian will complete a physical exam of animals that have been identified with a current Caregiver Observation. Any pertinent notes related to tests or procedures done or treatments started should be noted in Shelter Luv. The staff member on duty may be requested by the veterinarian to assist with the vet checks or data entry and they should do so under the direction of the veterinarian.

### **External Vet Exams**

Only the veterinarian, manager or Kitten Nursery Lead may authorize an animal going to an external veterinarian to seek medical care. If an animal requires emergency care, a note of who authorized the veterinary visit and to which veterinarian was authorized must be entered in Shelter Luv. Additionally an email sent to the Senior Veterinarian with details on the type of emergency, and hospital referred to, and a copy of all receipts must be sent for billing purposes.

## **INFECTIOUS DISEASE**

### **Panleukopenia**

Panleukopenia is an extremely contagious and dangerous virus that is very often fatal if unidentified or untreated, and can quickly spread through a population of animals if uncontained. The virus is difficult to kill and can live for years in an environment. This disease is also referred to as parvo and feline distemper. Due to the risk, any time panleukopenia is suspected, extreme care must be exercised to limit exposure to other animals until testing can confirm a positive or negative for the virus.

Panleukopenia typically presents as a combination of two or more of the symptoms listed below:

- Febrile- 104-107
- Diarrhea, typically with traces of blood
- Vomiting
- Dehydration
- Lethargy
- Inappetance
- Sudden death

\*NOTE: When kittens are with moms, vomit & diarrhea may not be present, but litters that fail to gain weight or start losing weight should be tested.

Panleukopenia is typically diagnosed with a rectal ELISA canine parvovirus snap test. Blood work can confirm with low WBC count and diagnosis can be confirmed post mortem through tissue samples sent for testing but this is not typically necessary.

Staff should perform a parvo test when panleukopenia symptoms are noted in a litter of kittens or kitten. Staff should elect to test the kitten in a group who is exhibiting the most symptoms for the disease, or test multiple kittens within the litter. If negative, staff can be retested every 24 hours as long as symptoms are present. If symptoms worsen during observation testing cycle can be started again. If the initial parvo test is positive the litter can be considered positive due to exposure and no further testing for the remaining littermates is needed.

For positive tests, kittens should be immediately moved into Quarantine to limit exposure to other uninfected kittens and the medical team should be notified to start treatment. If the medical team is not available, staff may start medications based on the treatment protocol written below. Staff will then be responsible for scheduling a Vet Exam in Shelter Luv for the following day to ensure veterinary observation for treatment. Refer to Medical SOP.

For kittens who are symptomatic but testing negative for panleukopenia extreme caution should be taken when feeding, handling and cleaning. These kittens could possibly test positive at a later time. A Vet Exam should be scheduled for the following day to ensure proper treatment and observation is started for any underlying causes to symptoms noted by staff. Refer to Medical SOP.

An extensive panleukopenia treatment and recovery protocol can be found supplemental to this document.

## Ringworm

Ringworm is a zoonotic fungus that can spread quickly through a population of animals and sometimes people if not isolated or contained in an environment. The fungus is difficult to kill and can live for years in a contaminated environment. Due to the risk, any time ringworm is suspected, extreme care must be exercised to limit exposure to other animals until testing can confirm a positive or negative for the fungus.

Ringworm is typically noted by areas of circular patchy hair loss. These regions are dry, scaly and sometimes reddened in the area of hair loss. Ringworm can be found on any part of the body but is typically noted in the face, feet and tail region on a feline. Sometimes the hair shaft can be broken and short in the area of hair loss, not presenting as a true area vacant of all hair follicles.

When ringworm is suspected at the Kitten Nursery, staff will write a Caregiver Observation for a veterinarian examination. Staff is not permitted to diagnose or isolate cats or kittens for potential ringworm without the confirmation diagnosis from the veterinarian. In the event that the veterinarian is not immediately available, staff should label the kennel as staff only and use maximum cleaning and barrier control when working with that litter until the diagnosis can be confirmed or denied.

The veterinarian may confirm hair loss as suspicious for ringworm via Wood's lamp test or direct microscopic examination. If ringworm is suspected, the veterinarian will obtain a DTM culture and place

in dark drawer labeled specifically for DTM cultures. The date and A# should be written on the bottom of the culture plate and the procedures should be entered under the completed Vet Exam in Shelter Luv. Once the DTM culture is taken, staff will be responsible for treating each cat/kitten in the litter and kenneling the group in Ringworm Isolation. The DTM culture should be read daily by the veterinarian to catch growth or color change right away. If no growth is seen after two weeks, the test can be considered negative. Staff will be responsible for bathing kittens twice weekly until DTM culture results are determined. All treatments and DTM cultures should be entered into Shelter Luv.

An extensive ringworm treatment and recovery protocol can be found supplemental to this document.

### **SCABIES AND MANGE IN CATS**

There are different types of mites in the skin which can cause mange. *Sarcoptes scabiei* (referred to as scabies) is an uncommon mite found in cats, but is more commonly found in dogs. *Notredes cati* or often referred to as feline scabies (because of it's similarity to scabies in dogs) is a more common finding. These mites can cause severe skin irritation and infections. The most common starting location for this mite is the face and ears, and can spread to the rest of the body. *Notredes* is very contagious. *Demodex cati* or *gatoi* is another mange mite that is not common in cats. Finding large numbers of *Demodex* could be a sign of compromised immune system.

#### Clinical signs

- intense itching
- frantic scratching
- patchy hair loss
- most common on face and ears

Humans in contact with animals who have mange can experience a rash of red, extremely uncomfortable bumps, (similar to mosquito bites) however most cat mange infections in humans are self limiting. The mange mites need the feline host to complete their life cycle.

### **FELINE CALICIVIRUS**

A common virus that causes oral disease and upper respiratory infections in cats. This is a highly contagious virus and cats that have become infected can shed viral particles in saliva, or nasal or ocular secretions. In the environment this virus can survive for up to one week (maybe longer) in contaminated environment. The incubation of this virus is 2-6 days before developing symptoms, and the infection can last 14-21 days typically. Infected cats can shed the virus for 2-3 weeks after developing signs of disease. After apparent recovery, as many as half of the infected cats can become asymptomatic carriers that shed viral particles for months. A small amount of these cats may continue to shed the virus for life.

#### Clinical Signs

- sneezing
- nasal congestion

- conjunctivitis
- nasal discharge
- oral ulcers on tongue, hard palate, gums, lips or nose
- anorexia
- lethargy
- fever
- blepharospasm (squinting)
- painful joints or lameness

Treatment generally is symptomatic, and may include eye medication, broad spectrum antibacterial drugs (to prevent secondary bacterial infection), and anti-inflammatory medications.

### FADING KITTEN PROTOCOL

There is a standard protocol for working with kittens who start to fade while at the Kitten Nursery. Once identified staff should adhere to the protocol as written to ensure consistency in care and to assist with determining the quality of life and next steps for a kitten who may not be thriving.

#### Symptoms

- Low body temperature -the kitten feels cool or cold to the touch
- Extreme lethargy: unable to stand, unable to lift head
- Labored breathing, gasping for breath;
- Meowing, crying out

#### Procedure

1. Immediately begin oral dextrose treatment by administering approximately 0.1cc of dextrose on the gum line. Repeat this every 3 minutes by setting a timer. Do this for at least 15 minutes straight, and for no longer than thirty minutes.
2. Take the kitten's temperature. If below 96 degrees, place in an incubator (if available) and set the incubator according to the posted chart.
3. Set humidity to 55% on the incubator, and fill the humidity tray with water and place a humidity sponge in the tray to prevent dehydrating the kitten.
4. If dehydrated, administer warm subcutaneous fluids at 10cc per pound.
5. The kitten should be placed inside the incubator
6. Temperature should be taken every 10-15 minutes, kitten temp should not increase more than 2 degrees in ten minutes or the incubator is too warm

After thirty minutes the kitten should be more responsive and have a core temperature increase of at least two degrees. If improvement is not seen or the kitten's temperature does not increase within thirty minutes, alert medical staff right away. If the kitten fades again within 24 hours, the kitten has very poor prognosis. Euthanasia is the best option in this circumstance to alleviate animal suffering. Only trained medical staff are authorized to perform euthanasia.

Do not use the nursery incubators for ringworm or panleukopenia infected litters. There are typically incubators available in panleukopenia (Quarantine 1 and Quarantine 2). If there is no incubator available, start the above protocol using a snuggle disc, or by wrapping the kitten in a towel and wrapping the towel with a heating pad. If a panleukopenia confirmed kitten begins to fade, alert a

member of the medical team immediately.

### **MEDICAL EMERGENCY PROTOCOL**

If an animal is observed to be in very poor health and is exhibiting signs or symptoms of severe or emergent medical issues, the staff member observing will notify the Nursery Lead and a veterinarian immediately. For overnight medical emergencies, overnight veterinary assistants should follow the Overnight Medical Protocol and notify the veterinarian on call for the night.

Examples of severe medical issues include but are not limited to:

- Obvious injury to any body part to include any open wounds or bleeding
- Fever above 104
- Blue, very pale or brick red gums
- Jaundice (yellow) in color, can be seen in skin pigment, eyes and gums
- Neurological signs or seizures
- Evidence of pain, such as restlessness, vocalizing, panting, hunched and immobilized
- For kittens, anorexia lasting more than 12 hours
- Walking in circles; appearing disoriented
- Extreme weight loss, over 10% of body weight

### **EUTHANASIA PROTOCOL**

The decision to euthanize an animal at the nursery is one that is never taken lightly, and is always made with the best interest of all of the animals in our care in mind. Euthanasia is only performed to alleviate suffering and when the prognosis of the animal's health is grave or very poor. Euthanasia must be approved by a veterinarian and can only be performed by approved veterinary staff. Overnight veterinary assistants can be authorized to euthanize with a veterinarian's approval and guidance. For overnight veterinary assistants, refer to the Overnight Medical Protocol for the euthanasia procedure for neonate kittens.

### **DECEASED ANIMAL PROTOCOL**

In the case of an animal's death, staff should adhere to the following protocol to limit exposure of disease.

Protocol for the Onsite Management of Deceased Animals

1. Be mindful to not handle the body in front of volunteers. Be as private as possible and be sensitive to the feelings of others.
2. Use gloves to handle the body.
3. Verify death by: assessing rigor, auscult the heart, watch for respirations, and check palpebral response.
4. If the kitten had signs of panleukopenia, such as vomiting or bloody, mucoid diarrhea - a parvo test should be completed and entered in Shelter Luv.
5. Wrap the kitten in a paper towel and place the body inside a black plastic bag and tie bag in a knot.
6. With a sharpie, write the kitten's name on a piece of white tape and adhere it to the outside of

the bag.

7. Place the kitten in freezer outside in the loading dock. A key is located in the nursery office.
8. Line out the name of the deceased kitten on their kennel card and indicated date of death.
9. Remove their feeding chart and sanitize it.
10. Only the cat manager, the cat team leads, and medical staff can outcome a death or euthanasia in Shelter Luv. If none of these staff members are available, notify all via email to perform the outcome.

Important Note: The illness and/or death of a kitten can be extremely emotionally taxing. Be aware of your mental state, and take a break if you need to. Learn and recognize the symptoms of compassion fatigue, and ask for help if you need it.

## SECTION 9: BEHAVIOR AND ENRICHMENT

Neonate kittens three weeks and younger do not benefit from human interaction or cuddling. They cannot regulate their body temperature, and it is in their best interest to return to their warm environment after feeding. Occasionally, some older under-socialized weaned kittens will reside in the nursery. These kittens are great candidates for foster homes with volunteers who can work on their behavior improvement at home in a calm and accommodating environment. The nursery does not offer any opportunities for staff or volunteers to participate in enrichment, as feeding and medical care take priority.

### KENNEL ENRICHMENT

Kennel enrichment is important for the mental stimulation of the animals being housed at the Kitten Nursery. Once kittens are three weeks and older, it is important that they receive enrichment items in their kennels to promote play and health. Do not place enrichment items in the suite of kittens younger than three weeks as they do not play yet and the items can clutter their living space (except for one stuffed plush for comfort). Examples of enrichment items include ball toys, crinkle toys, mouse toys, soft toys, feather toys, spring toys, cut paper towel rolls, and small boxes.

Queens housed in the nursery have their own enrichment needs. The nursery environment can be very stressful to moms so care should be taken to ensure their comfort. If a queen is nervous or shy, the kennel should be partially covered with a towel or blanket to provide privacy. Queens with weaned kittens should be given a kennel insert to provide them with a place to get away from their kittens. Nursery moms should be monitored closely for signs of stress to ensure that they are allowing their kittens to nurse.

## SECTION 10: ANIMAL SAFETY AND HANDLING

It is the responsibility of all staff assigned to animal care to handle animals in a safe, effective and humane manner. All staff should adhere to Best Friends Animal Society principles and methods when working with and directly handling animals to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers and the animals in our care. There are tools that can be used in different situations to assist with safety when dealing with

difficult or loose animals, but staff cannot utilize these techniques or tools without appropriate training to avoid injury to both the animal or surrounding patrons.

## **SAFE ANIMAL HANDLING & BODY LANGUAGE**

Safe, effective animal handling requires experience and knowledge. It is important to read the body language that animal is displaying prior to handling. Take a few moments to visually assess each cat before handling to make sure it is safe for you to approach. Prior to handling an unfamiliar animal, review the information about that animal on the kennel card as there may be information that allows you to have a better understanding of behavior or history prior to handling.

Before opening a cage or condo door, speak to the animal in a soft and pleasant voice. Avoid staring directly at the cat, as sometimes an unbroken stare can be intimidating for an animal. Never completely block an adult cat's kennel with your body; angle your body so they don't feel cornered. If a cat feels they have the option of "flight", they will not be forced to resort to "fight." Once the kennel door has been opened, assess the behavior and body language of the cat.

### **Basic Feline Body Language**

Cats will generally communicate with their body to help staff predict their behavior if approached. While each individual cat may not demonstrate the exact same body language or signals, there are some important key signs that can help staff proceed safely with animal care.

#### **Zone 1- Signs of Relaxation/Comfort**

- Tail up
- Ears up
- Eyes relaxed
- Relaxed body postures
- Belly exposed
- Looking or turning away
- Casual grooming
- Scent marking

#### **Zone 2- Signs of Fear/Nervousness**

- Tail down or flicking
- Ears flat and horizontal along plane of head
- Eyes dilated
- Tense body postures
- Belly covered/ protected
- Lip-licking
- Inappetance

#### **Zone 3- Signs of Defensive Behavior**

- Tail puffed out
- Ears pinned to head
- Eyes dilated, hard staring
- Tense body postures

- Hissing
- Growling and Vocalizing
- Short bursts of movement

### **Cat Handling**

If the cat is showing relaxing or comfortable body language, the staff member can proceed and approach to handle or pick up the cat. To remove the cat, hold the scruff of the neck while holding the cat's weight by lifting the rear; never lifting by the scruff only for adult cats. More specifically, place the crook of one hand (area between thumb and forefinger) on the cat's neck at the base of the skull to keep the cat facing away from the handler. Reach the other arm over the cat's back and support the chest and abdomen with the hand and forearm, cradling the cat's against the body (football carry). Move cat quickly to another cage or a carrier. It is not recommended to carry cats any great distance as they are highly reactive animals which can easily startle and change from relaxed to fearful or defensive in a few short seconds. If placing a cat into a carrier, support body weight in rear with hind limbs restrained while scruffing. Place cat into carrier rear end first, controlling the cat's head safely away from arms. Release the cat when the body is completely in the carrier and close door.

### **HANDLING FEARFUL ANIMALS**

Animals who are frightened and do not want to come out of a cage can be difficult to handle. The first step is to read the body language. Signs of a fearful animal include (besides the obvious airplane ears, dilated eyes and stiff body language): standing or lying tensely at the rear of the cage, facing the back corner of the cage or room, not approaching, glancing over the shoulder keeping handler in sight.

There are several options for handling these animals. Speak to the animal in a soft and soothing tone of voice. Move slowly near cage and try to approach on the animal's level if possible. Avoid quick movements or looming over the animal directly as this can increase their fear level. Avoid staring or intense eye contact for it can be intimidating. Whenever possible, allow the animal to approach the front of the cage in its own time. Offer treats or food without making eye contact. It is a good sign if an animal is relaxed enough to take a treat.

It is safer to take the time to allow the animal to approach rather than entering into the cage or reaching in to grab the animal. Most fearful animals would rather flee than fight, but they will bite if they feel cornered and unable to escape. If you need to move or handle a fearful cat, you can use the end of a wand toy or back scratcher to gently pet the top of the cat's head. This will give you the ability to see how the cat may handle touch or further approach. If the cat stays frozen and does not attempt to flee in that situation, slowly move towards the cat and practice the safe handling technique to pick up the cat and move them into their new kennel or carrier. One approach to alleviate stress for the animal, may be wrapping in a towel or thick blanket. If the cat attempts to flee, try to approach at a later time. The cat may not be comfortable being handled at that moment and the attempted handling could escalate to a situation that results in injury to the staff or unnecessary stress on the animal.

## **SECTION 11: FOSTER**

The information in this section is intended to supplement the BFAS LA Foster SOP. Staff is expected to

adhere to the policies listed in the Foster SOP, as well as these procedures at all times.

### **ANIMAL SELECTION**

The Foster Coordinators are responsible for selecting animals to go into foster homes. The Nursery Lead can assist in flagging groups of kittens for potential foster homes pending approval from the Foster Coordinator.

If any nursery staff feel that a specific group of kittens or kitten would benefit from being moved into a foster home, they should notify the Nursery Lead about the situation and why they feel the animal would benefit from foster. The lead will then determine if the kitten(s) match the guidelines set forth by the foster program. This does not guarantee that the animal will be sent in to a foster home, but it will be given due consideration.

### **SUPPLIES**

Foster parents are only permitted to pick up supplies through the foster department. If a foster parent volunteers onsite or comes to the Kitten Nursery without a scheduled appointment staff should direct the foster parent to contact the foster department or contact them directly to receive permission prior to dispensing supplies.

## **SECTION 12: VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers working at the Kitten Nursery should be treated with kindness and respect. The Customer Service and Volunteer guidelines should be adhered to at all times.

### **ONBOARDING**

The Kitten Nursery volunteer onboarding will be done in specific steps for new volunteers to ensure consistency in training. The steps are listed below:

1. Completion of Online Training Videos and Quizzes
2. Training Session #1 - Hands On Shadow of a Nursery Staff Member
3. Training Session #2 - Close Supervision of a Nursery Staff Member
4. Additional Training Sessions may be needed

### **VOLUNTEER DUTIES**

Volunteers can register for either a feeding shift or a cleaning shift. Feeding shift volunteers are expected to feed bottle and weaned kittens under staff supervision and guidance. Cleaning shift volunteers are responsible for cleaning occupied kennels and other cleaning tasks. All volunteers are responsible for maintaining the general cleanliness of the nursery. Volunteers must adhere to nursery protocols at all times.

### **MENTORS**

Mentors are specially selected volunteers who are qualified to assist with training and onboarding new

volunteers. These volunteer mentors will be essential for helping and maintaining continuity in the training process.

## **SECTION 13: CLEANING AGENTS**

### **RESCUE (FORMERLY KNOWN AS ACCEL)**

A disinfectant formulated specifically for animal facilities to be used to sanitize all washable surfaces. Always use a 1:16 dilution ratio as this is the strength needed to kill non-enveloped viruses such as parvovirus. Staff will keep a jug of pre-mixed Rescue available in the nursery kitchen for use to refill Rescue spray bottles. All nursery dishes will be submerged in a bin of Rescue in the nursery kitchen, which is dumped and refilled with fresh Rescue every morning. When using Rescue the solution should saturate the surface being cleaned to allow the object or surface to have direct wet contact for a minimum of five minutes. After 5 minutes, the object needs to be rinsed and left to dry. All organic matter must be cleaned from the surface with Dawn mixture before saturating with Rescue to be effective.

### **BLEACH**

Disinfectant used in nursery laundry. Each load of laundry should contain one full cup of bleach regardless of the amount of laundry being cleaned.

### **DAWN MIXTURE**

Degreasing agent for use on all washable surfaces. Used to remove organic material from surfaces before the sanitation with Rescue. This chemical should be used at a dilute concentration to minimize residue and streaking. Only use 5 drops of Dawn and fill the remainder of the 32 ounce spray bottle with warm water.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF KITTEN NURSERY STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL**

By signing this acknowledgement, I understand and agree as follows:

I have received and have reviewed the contents of this Standard Operating Procedures Manual. I understand that the policies, procedures, and guidelines set forth in this handbook are subject to change by management at any time.

Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_