

ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOL

The Board recognizes that under the proper conditions, animals can be an effective teaching aid. In order to protect both children and animals, the following guidelines are adopted for use in all schools in the district.

1. The bringing of animals into the classroom must not violate town/state/federal ordinances.
2. The only animals and animal products (e.g., owl pellets for dissection) allowed in a classroom must be for a specific and appropriate educational purpose and shall be allowed for the amount of time necessary to achieve the educational goal.
3. Precautions should be taken to minimize transmission of all diseases and injuries (e.g., Salmonella, rabies, ringworm, bites, scratches, etc.).
4. All animals must be in good physical condition and vaccinated against transmittable diseases. Dogs must have completed an animal therapy certification program that includes initial instruction and testing, a requirement for recertification, and evidence of liability insurance. Additionally, dogs, cats, and ferrets require proof of current rabies vaccination. Animals are to be kept clean and free of intestinal parasites, fleas, ticks, mites and lice.
5. Certain groups of people may be more susceptible to diseases, including infants, children, pregnant women and those with weakened immune systems. Parents and staff will be contacted to determine if special considerations are needed for any children and staff who are immunocompromised, who have allergies, or who have asthma.
6. The teacher will be responsible for the proper control of animals brought to school for instructional purposes including the effective protection of children when animals are in the school. This will include keeping the animal in an appropriate cage or container, supervising human-animal contact and handling fecal material in a sanitary manner.
7. No animals are to be allowed to run freely in the classrooms, food areas or activity areas.
8. Areas should be designated for animal contact. Such areas should be properly cleaned regularly and after animal contact. Food or drink should not be consumed in these areas.
9. All fecal material must be cleaned from the cage of any mammal or bird on an as needed basis (at a minimum of one time per week) and appropriate sanitizer used. Reptiles, fish and insects must be cared for in a manner to minimize odor and maintain health. Persons cleaning cages must wear gloves, masks and glasses or goggles. Cleaning should be performed by people older than five years and under the supervision of an adult. Ideally, cleaning should be performed when other children are not in the room.
10. People shall wash their hands after contact with animals, animal products or their environment. Hand hygiene should be stressed, using verbal and written educational materials.
11. Certain animals pose additional risks and contact should not be permitted with young children.
12. Wild or exotic animals are not permitted in classrooms, unless under the control of a professional.

**ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOL
(continued)**

It will be the responsibility of the teacher to provide for a plan of care for classroom housed animals in the event of an emergency school closing which might cause disruption of the routine care of the animals. In each school where these animals are housed, there should be a plan whereby the staff member who visits the school daily during the emergency closing will be aware of the animals' presence and see to their care. If no staff member visits the school daily in such circumstances, the teacher is responsible for the daily care of the animal(s).

Teachers must be contacted prior to having animals in their classroom. No animal shall be in school unless the teacher involved is familiar with the appropriate care, feeding and handling of that animal and of any potential dangers caused by that animal. It shall be the responsibility of the teacher to become familiar with each animal as it relates to the well-being of the individual students in that particular classroom.

The principal shall be advised of any animals to be housed in the classroom. At the principal's discretion, permission to keep the animal may be denied based on these considerations: (1) the purpose for the animal's presence, (2) the ability of the teacher to control the animal and/or (3) the past practice in the classroom.

Legal Reference:

- National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, Inc., Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings, 2006.

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