

## **Instruction**

### **Live Animals in the Classroom**

The Board of Education recognizes that there are medical and physical dangers associated with animals, both wild and domesticated, in the classroom and/or on school property. The Board also recognizes that under proper conditions, animals can be an effective teaching aid. The following guidelines are adopted regarding all animals (mammals, birds, reptiles/amphibians, fish, insects,) in the classroom or on school property.

- All requests to have animals in the classroom or on school property must be submitted to the Principal in writing. Included in the request should be a description of the activity, type of animal, educational purpose/benefit, length of activity, and a plan for the care of the animal. The Principal has the discretion to permit or deny the presence of animals.
- Parents/guardians must be notified in writing prior to any activity involving animals.
- Students and teachers with allergies must receive special consideration before animals are brought into a school. Prior to any exposure to animals in school, the teacher should be aware of any condition such as allergies which could be exacerbated by exposure to animals. Appropriate and reasonable accommodations will be accorded to protect the health of such individuals.
- All requests to take field trips involving animals must be submitted to the Principal in writing. In determining whether to grant the request, the Principal shall be guided by the district policy on field trips and shall also take into consideration any known allergies among the students and the possible side effects of the planned exposure to animals.
- No domesticated animals, including dogs, cats, primates, or livestock, shall be allowed in schools unless proof of appropriate and/or current rabies vaccination is provided. Any domesticated mammal that is too young to be immunized for rabies will not be handled by students.
- No wild animal (i.e., skunks, raccoons, bats, ground hogs, monkeys, or fox) shall be allowed unless under the control of an individual trained in the care and management of the animals (i.e., zookeepers, docents, veterinarians, etc.)
- All animals brought for exhibit must be restrained by the owner/handler.
- No poisonous animals are allowed unless brought in cages/containers that prevent contact with students and faculty.
- Each teacher is responsible for the proper supervision and control of students under his/her direction whenever there is an exhibit or activity involving animals in the school.

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### **Live Animals in the Classroom (continued)**

- Animals will be allowed to be housed in classrooms only for a specified and appropriate educational purpose for the time necessary to achieve the educational goal.
- It is the responsibility of the teacher to provide a plan of care for classroom-housed animals including care on weekends and during emergency closure. No animals shall be housed at school unless the teacher involved is familiar with the appropriate care, feeding, and handling of the animals. All waste products must be cleaned from cages on a daily basis by an adult such as a teacher, assistant, volunteer, etc. Cages will not be cleaned by students and students will not have direct contact with animal waste products.
- Each teacher is responsible for the proper control of animals brought to the classroom for instructional purposes, including the effective protection of students. This includes keeping the animals in appropriate cages or containers for the protection of the animal and individuals.
- No animals will be allowed free range in the facility.
- Supervised handwashing for a minimum of twenty seconds with soap and water will be conducted by students after handling animals. Handwashing will be conducted immediately after the activity has ended and prior to any further school or classroom activity. Eating/drinking will not be allowed during the animal exhibition or during activities involving animals.
- The Principal and parent/guardian must be notified as soon as possible if an individual is bitten by an animal or any incident occurs which could have an adverse effect on physical or emotional health. The supervising teacher will complete a written report describing the incident.

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Teachers shall adhere to the following regulations when the Principal has authorized animals or insects to be brought to, or housed in, the classroom:

1. Teachers should select animals or insects that will suit their specific instructional needs. The animal or insect should be practical to care for in the environment provided in or near the building with only minimal modification. Teachers shall also make arrangements to provide care during weekends, long holiday breaks and during emergency closings.
2. Fur-bearing animals may be allergenic, causing a reaction in sensitized individuals. Teachers must determine whether any student who will be exposed to the animal has an allergy to that type of animal. The animal shall not be housed in a classroom where there is a student with such an allergy. At any time, if it is suspected that a student or staff member has had an allergic response to the animal, the animal shall be removed from the classroom or, if necessary, from the building.
3. Any animal kept in the classroom for an extended stay shall be examined by a veterinarian to assure the animal is free from any apparent disease.
4. Handling of all animals should be limited to that which is necessary, such as teacher-supervised instructional activities, feeding and watering and cleaning of the housing. Unless the animal or insect is part of a specific activity, it must remain in its cage or housing.
5. Teachers must emphasize the importance of proper hand washing immediately after handling any animal.
6. Pets that do not provide a service to a person with a disability are not permitted on campus.
7. The district permits service animals, which are individually trained, and licensed and identified in compliance with applicable state statutes, in school facilities and on school grounds.
  - Owners/users are expected to ensure the good conduct, health, care and protection of their service animal.
  - The service animal must be kept under control at all times.
  - Owners/users are responsible for any damage done by the animal and for the upkeep of any area occupied by the animal.
  - Service animals must not be left unattended anywhere on school grounds at any time.
  - A service animal must wear a “harness or an orange-colored leash and collar which makes it readily identifiable as a guide dog” that is licensed.

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### **Live Animals in the Classroom**

#### **Restrictions**

When preparing for the introduction of live animals or insects into the classroom setting, the following prohibitions and rules shall be observed:

1. Wild, exotic or aggressive animals are prohibited.
2. Bats shall not be kept, as they are known carries of the rabies virus.
3. Parrots, parakeets and other psittacine birds may be carriers of human respiratory diseases and shall not be kept in schools unless they have been tested and certified as psittacosis-free.
4. Red-eared turtles, also known as painted turtles, are known carriers of salmonella, and shall not be kept in a classroom unless the supplier provides written documentation that the turtle is salmonella-free. Many other reptiles also harbor salmonella bacteria and must be handled cautiously and only by the teacher.
5. Raccoons, ferrets and skunks shall not be brought to school because they may inflict severe bites.
6. Poisonous animals and insects are prohibited.
7. Wild animals shall not be brought into the classroom unless they are under the direct supervision of a trained representative of a conservation agency or public zoo.
8. Insects that sting or bite shall not be intentionally brought into the classroom.
9. Plans must be made for the food, housing and general comfort of an animal before it is brought into the classroom.
10. Animal housing must be kept in a clean, sanitary condition, free of odor. Waste shall be disposed of in a tied plastic bag.
11. All animal bites, stings or scratches shall be reported immediately to the school nurse, Principal, and a local health authority should be consulted for advice. Teachers shall inform the parent/guardian of the injury and complete a student accident report form.