

**SUBJECT: ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOL (INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES)**

**Animals and Pets on School Property**

It is the policy of the Board of Education for health and safety reasons, to prohibit animals and pets of any kind in school buildings and on school district property (including playing fields, school buses) except:

- For purposes of the instructional program with the prior approver of the building administrator
- Animals under the control of public safety officers with the prior approval of the Superintendent of Schools or designee; and
- Animals trained to assist individuals with disabilities (e.g. service dogs) in compliance with federal and state law.
- With prior approval of the Building Principal and Superintendent, therapy dogs are permitted in school.

**Study and Care of Live Animals**

Observation and experimentation with living organisms and animals gives students unique perspectives of life processes. Animals and animal materials should be used respectively and for the purpose of meeting course objectives.

Any school which cares for or uses animals for study shall ensure that each animal in the school be afforded the following:

- a) Appropriate quarters;
- b) Sufficient space for the normal behavior and postural requirements of the species;
- c) Proper ventilation, lighting, and temperature control;
- d) Adequate food and clean drinking water; and
- e) Quarters, which shall be cleaned on a regular basis and located in an area where undue stress and disturbance are minimized.

Only the teacher or those students designated by the teacher are to handle the animals.

It shall be the responsibility of the Principal or their designee to develop a plan of care for those animals housed in school in the event of an emergency school closing or in the event the animals remain in the classroom on days when school is not in session. If the Building Principal or designee determines that this policy has been violated, they are authorized to contact the Superintendent of Schools, the County Health Department, Animal Control and/or the Police Department to request assistance to enforce this policy.

**Dissection of Animals**

The Board of Education recognizes that animal dissection is an integral part of the study of living things and instruction in the life sciences. The Board also recognizes that some students have a moral or religious objection to dissection or otherwise harming or destroying animals. In accordance with Section 809 of the Education Law, any student who objects to dissecting animals may opt-out of dissection activities, provided that the student performs an alternative project through which they can learn and be assessed on material required by the course. An alternative project may include, but is not limited to: computer programs, internet simulations, plastic models, and movies, and is subject to approval by the student's teacher. The student's objection must be substantiated in writing by the student's parent/guardian.

(Continued)

**SUBJECT: ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOL (INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES) (Cont'd.)**

Effective July 1, 2011, the District will give reasonable notice to all students enrolled in a course that includes the dissection of an animal and students' parent(s)/legal guardian(s) about their rights to seek an alternate project to dissection. Such notice shall be made available upon request at the school and distributed to parents and students enrolled in a course that includes dissection at least once at the beginning of the school year.

No Student shall be discriminated against based upon their decision to exercise the right to opt-out of animal dissection.

**Instruction in the Humane Treatment of Animals**

Students in elementary school must receive instruction in the humane treatment and protection of animals and the importance of the part they play in the economy of nature as well as the necessity of controlling the proliferation of animals that are subsequently abandoned and caused to suffer extreme cruelty. Such instruction shall be for a period of time as specified by the Board of Regents and may be joined with work in literature, reading, language, nature study, or ethnology.

Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 United States Code (USC) Section 12101 et. seq. Education Law Section 809  
8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) Section 100.2(c)(8)