

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 283**

**SECTION/FILE** 630 **DATE OF ADOPTION** 09/11/06

**TITLE** Live Animals In The Classroom Or On School Property

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe environment for our students and staff.

**II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The School Board 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 valuable learning experience. Maintaining an animal in a classroom merely as a classroom pet is forbidden. The following guidelines and procedures are adopted regarding all animals (such as mammals, birds, reptiles/amphibians, fish) in the classroom or on school property.

**III. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Building Principals shall be responsible for the implementation and surveillance of this policy.

**IV. EXCEPTION**

This policy allows for practice as provided for under Minnesota Human Rights Act, Minnesota Statutes Section 363A.19 (a).

## GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

### **I. GUIDELINES**

1. All requests to have animals in the classroom or on school property must be submitted to the principal or designee 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, or designee, has the discretion to permit or deny the presence of animals.
2. No domesticated mammals, such as dogs, cats, primates, or livestock, shall be allowed in schools unless proof of appropriate and/or current rabies vaccination is provided. Students will not handle any domesticated mammal that is too young to be immunized for rabies. The teacher or classroom supervisor must be present when animals are taken out of a cage and handled by students.
3. Students, staff and others 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.
4. No wild animals (skunks, raccoons, badgers, lynx, bobcats, bats, snakes, monkeys, coyotes fox, etc.) shall be allowed unless under the control of an individual trained in the care and management of the animals (zookeepers, docents, veterinarians, etc.).
5. All animals brought for exhibition must be restrained by the owner/handler.
6. No poisonous animals are allowed unless brought in cages or containers that prevent contact with students and faculty.
7. Service dogs are allowed on school property, including school buses, as specified in MN Statute 256C.02

#### Background:

Asthma is a leading cause of school absences. Time lost from school negatively affects grades, academic achievement, self-esteem, and future life successes.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency has published a special document related to asthma in the schools that includes the following statements:

- Fur-bearing and warm-blooded animals including gerbils, birds, cats, dogs, mice and rats may trigger or exacerbate asthma episodes.
- Proteins, which act as allergens in the dander, urine, or saliva of these warm-blooded animals may sensitize individuals and can cause allergic reactions or trigger asthma episodes. If an animal is present in the school, there is a possibility of direct, daily exposure to the animal's dander and bodily fluids.
- Even after extensive cleaning, pet allergen levels may stay in the indoor environment for several months after the animal is removed.

- The most effective method to controlling exposure to animal allergens in schools is to keep schools free of feathered or furred animals.

## II. PROCEDURES

### Purpose of Procedures:

The purpose of having procedures for the presence of animals in the district schools is:

- To decrease student exposure to potentially harmful allergens.
- To protect the wellbeing of the animals.

To provide a safe environment for students, staff and others.

- To inform staff regarding precautions and necessary conditions regarding animals, and to provide a basic minimum standard district-wide.
1. It is the responsibility of the teacher to provide a plan for care of 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. An adult such as a teacher, assistant, volunteer, etc, must clean all waste products from cages on a regular basis using a germicidal cleaner. Students will not clean cages and students will not have direct contact with animal waste products.
  2. 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.
  3. No animals will be allowed free range in the facility.
  4. Supervised hand washing for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and water will be conducted by students after handling animals. Hand washing 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.
  5. The principal, school nurse and parent/guardian must be notified as soon as possible if an animal bites an individual 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.
  6. Teachers may bring and maintain goldfish or tropical fish in suitable bowls or tanks, but turtles, birds, snakes or other animals which might present a health hazard shall not be allowed without the approval of the principal, and then only for class observation and study for a limited period of time.
  7. Science teachers may have animals in appropriate facilities in, or adjacent to, laboratories for the purpose of class study and experimentation, provided that the utmost care is taken to prevent accident and/or suffering to the animals. The procedures of this policy must be followed at all times.
  8. Animals are not to be transported on school buses, except for service dogs.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 256C.02 (Public accommodations)

