

**ANIMALS AS PART OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

**POLICY:**

Requests to include animals in the instructional program of the classroom or school shall be approved by the principal. For Therapy Animals, additional approval needs to be obtained from the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator or designee for staff requests and from the Section 504 Coordinator or designee for student requests. Health issues (severe allergies, vaccinated status of the animal, etc.) involving students and staff shall be addressed before permission is given to allow the animal in the school.

If the instructional program involving the animal is ongoing and the animal will remain at school when school is not in session, appropriate arrangements for the animal's care must be made.

Animals that are part of the instructional program shall be under the control of their adult owner, the teacher, or designated students at all times.

This policy does not apply to service animals for the disabled.

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### **PROCEDURES:**

Prior to granting or denying a request to include an animal in the school's instructional program, the principal shall evaluate the following issues:

1. There is an educational benefit to be gained by the inclusion of the animal in the instructional program.
2. There is an appropriate plan for the control of the animal, especially if wild or poisonous.
3. Any health concerns involving students, staff, or other animals have been thoroughly addressed (i.e., allergies, the vaccination status of the animal, if relevant, or the transmission of disease from the animal).
4. The animal's health, safety, and well-being have been appropriately evaluated.
5. Sanitary issues have been addressed (i.e., animal waste, the personal hygiene of students or staff in contact with the animal, etc.).

In addition to the above procedures, when allowing a Therapy Animal in the school's instructional program, these additional considerations should be followed:

1. The Therapy Animal must be licensed and immunized in accordance with the laws, regulations, and ordinances of the city of Lake Stevens, Snohomish County, and the state of Washington. The Principal should verify current license and immunization records.
2. The Therapy Animal should be trained by an accredited certified training facility. The principal should maintain the certified training documentation while the Therapy Animal is on the campus.
3. The Therapy Animals' handler should also be trained according to the best practices in the field.
4. The Therapy Animal should be a fully grown, mature animal. It is advisable that the animal be at least twelve months old.
5. The breed of the Therapy Animal should be one of intelligence and even-temperament (i.e. Labrador or Golden Retriever)
6. The Therapy Animal will be fitted with a lead that is always worn when on school property.
7. The Therapy Animal will never be left unattended by their handler.
8. Written parent/guardian consent should be obtained prior to ongoing work with an individual student using a Therapy Animal.

A. Removal or Exclusion of a Therapy Animal from School or School Property.

The building principal or district administrator may request to remove a therapy animal from school, a school sponsored activity, or school property if the animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control the animal. Examples of the animal being out of control include, but are not limited to the following:

1. The presence of the animal poses a direct threat to the health and/or safety of others;
2. The animal significantly disrupts or interferes with the instruction program, school activities, or student learning. However, annoyance on the part of the others is not an unreasonable risk to property or others to justify the removal of the therapy animal;
3. The presence of the animal would result in a fundamental alteration of any school program;
4. The individual in control of the animal fails to appropriately care for the animal, including feeding, exercising, taking outside for performance of excretory functions, and cleaning up after the animal;
5. The animal is ill; or
6. The animal is not housebroken.

B. Responsibility/Liability

1. Neither the district, nor its employees, are responsible for the cost, care or supervision of the therapy animal.
2. The owner/handler of the service animal is responsible for any and all damage caused by the service animal at school, on school premises or at school activities.