

1 Great Falls School District

2
3 **INSTRUCTION**

2520

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5 Animals/Pets in School

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

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- 13 • Animals will be allowed to be housed in classrooms only for specified and appropriate
14 educational purpose for the time necessary to achieve the educational goal. The District
15 will permit the use of service animals by an individual with a disability according to
16 federal regulations and GFPS Board Policy 8425—Service Animals.
 - 17 • Under no circumstances are animals to be transported on school buses.
 - 18 • All requests to have animals in the classroom or on school property must have prior
19 approval from the supervising teacher and building principal. The request must identify
20 type of animal/pet, educational purpose, length of activity, and plan for the care of the
21 animal. The principal has the discretion to permit or deny the presence of animals.
 - 22 • Students and teachers with allergies must receive special consideration before animals are
23 brought into the school. Prior to any exposure to animals in school, the teacher shall
24 research to ensure that any condition such as allergies will not be exacerbated by
25 exposure to animals. See Policy 8302R regarding animals in the Classroom and Indoor
26 Air Quality for more information.
 - 27 • All requests to take field trips involving animals must be submitted to the principal in
28 writing. The principal shall be guided by the district policy on field trips (Board Policy
29 2320) and shall also take into consideration any known allergies among the students.
30 (Board Policy 2320)
 - 31 • Domesticated animals, including dogs, cats, primates, or livestock, may be allowed in
32 schools for educational purposes, but only with proof of all appropriate vaccinations
33 and/or current rabies vaccination. Any domesticated mammal that is too young to be
34 immunized for rabies will not be allowed.
 - 35 • Wild animals (e.g., skunks, raccoons, badgers, lynx, bobcats, bats, coyotes, or fox) shall
36 not be allowed unless under the control of an individual trained in the care and
37 management of the animals (e.g., zookeepers, docents, veterinarians, etc.)
 - 38 • All animals brought for exhibit must be restrained by the owner/handler.
 - 39 • Poisonous animals are not allowed.
 - 40 • Each teacher is responsible for the proper supervision and control of students under
41 his/her direction whenever there is an exhibit or activity involving animals in the school.
 - 42 • It is the responsibility of the teacher to provide a plan of care for classroom-housed
43 animals including care on weekends, holidays, and during emergency closure.
 - 44 • No animals will be allowed free range in district facilities or on district property.

- 1 • The principal must be notified as soon as possible if an individual is bitten by an animal,
2 or any incident occurs which could have an adverse effect on physical or emotional
3 health.
- 4 • The principal must notify parents/guardians of involved students. The principal must also
5 contact their immediate supervisor.
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7 Cross References:

- 8 Policy 2320 Field Trips, Excursions and Outdoor Education
- 9 Policy 2320R Field Trips
- 10 Policy 8302 Indoor Air Quality
- 11 Policy 8302R Guidelines for Indoor Air Quality
- 12 Policy 8425 Service Animals
- 13 Policy 8425F Service Animals Inquiries
- 14 Policy 8426 Therapy Animals

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16 Policy History:

- 17 Adopted on: November 9, 2015
- 18 Revised on: November 14, 2016
- 19 Revised on: May 12, 2025