



Orange Southwest School District

24 Central Street, Randolph, VT

802-728-5052

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REQUIRED¹

ANIMAL DISSECTION

Statement of Policy

It is the policy of the OSSD Board to safeguard a student's right to be excused from participating in any lesson, exercise or assessment requiring the student to dissect, vivisect or otherwise harm or destroy an animal or any part of an animal, or to observe any of these activities, as part of a course of instruction.

Definitions

1. **Animal** means any organism of the kingdom animalia and includes an animal's cadaver or the severed parts of an animal's cadaver.²

Administrative Responsibilities

The superintendent, or designee, shall ensure that

1. Procedures providing the following are developed:³
 - 1) Timely notification to each student enrolled in the course and to the student's parent or guardian of the student's right to be excused from participating in or observing the lesson; and
 - 2) The process by which a student may exercise this right.⁴
2. A student who is excused under this policy is provided with alternative methods through which they can learn and be assessed on material required by the course. The alternative methods must be developed by the teacher of the course, in consultation with the principal if necessary.⁵
3. No student is discriminated against based on the decision to exercise the right to be excused afforded by this policy.⁶

¹ 16 V.S.A. § 912(b) requires each school district to adopt and implement policies regarding a student's right to be excused from participating in any lesson, exercise, or assessment requiring the student to dissect, vivisect, or otherwise harm or destroy an animal as part of a course of instruction.

² 16 V.S.A. § 912(c)

³ 16 V.S.A. § 912(b) requires procedures that provide "timely notification" to students and parents; processes for students to exercise this right.

⁴ 16 V.S.A. § 912(b) (1). The law does not provide a definition of "timely notice." Nor does the law require that the processes for students to follow when choosing to opt out of activities covered by the law have specific components. It is likely that annual notice to parents and students through handbooks or course syllabi will be sufficient to comply with the timely notice requirement. The notice should indicate approximately when dissection activities (if any) may take place in specific courses. Processes for students to opt out of activities covered by this policy should indicate how and when a student must notify the course teacher of his or her intention to be excused from an activity.

⁵ This provision is a required component of the policy on this subject adopted by the school board. See 16 V.S.A. § 912(b)(2).

⁶ 5 This provision is a required component of the policy on this subject adopted by the school board. See 16 V.S.A. § 912(b)(3).

<i>VSBA Review Date</i>	August 15, 2023
<i>Date Warned</i>	June 17, 2026
<i>Date Adopted</i>	July 8, 2026
<i>Legal References</i>	16 V.S.A. §912
<i>Cross References</i>	