

ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOL

The Board recognizes that animals have educational value in the school setting, but only under conditions that insure the safety and well-being of the students, staff, and the animal. Live animals in the classroom provide opportunities to learn about diversity, habitat, humane care, animal growth and development, reproduction, and behavior. A teacher must have a clear understanding of, and a strong commitment to, the responsible care of living animals before making any decision to use live animals for educational study. Preparation for the use of live animals should include acquisition of knowledge on care appropriate to the species being used including housing, food, exercise, and the appropriate placement of the animals at the conclusion of the study. Reputable pet stores in the community are excellent resources to help a teacher answer these questions.

Prior approval must be received from the principal before any animals are brought into the school. Animals in schools shall be planned and approved in accordance with established procedures.

Legal References: Wisconsin Administrative Code (Animal Transportation on School Bus)
TRANS 300.16
Safe, Healthful, Clean and Sanitary Facilities for Students and Staff
121.02(1)(I) & 254.56
Reporting of Diseases to Public Health Officer 252.21

Cross Reference: Communicable Disease Policy, 453.3-Rule

Adoption Date: August 28, 2000

ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOL

Procedures

- A. PURPOSE OF ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOLS POLICY
- B. RESIDENT ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS
- C. ANIMAL VISITATION TO SCHOOLS
- D. CERTIFIED SERVICE DOGS

A. PURPOSE OF ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOLS POLICY

A written, Board approved animals in the schools policy will:

- Ensure a safe learning environment for both people and animals.
- Maximize the beneficial impacts of animals in the school setting.
- Establish guidelines for the integration of an animal into the classroom setting.
- Develop a listing of what animals would not make good resident animals.
- Help teachers with the decision-making process with regards to whether or not to include an animal into the classroom setting.
- Provide guidelines for animal visitations to the classroom.

B. RESIDENT ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS

1. Consideration of a Resident Animal

- Live animals in the classroom provide opportunities to learn about diversity, habitat, humane care, animal growth and development, reproduction, and behavior.
- A teacher must have a clear understanding of, and a strong commitment to, the responsible care of living animals before making any decision to use live animals for educational study. Preparation for the use of live animals should include acquisition of knowledge on care appropriate to the species being used including housing, food, exercise, and the appropriate placement of the animals at the conclusion of the study. The Humane Society and reputable pet stores in the community are excellent resources to help a teacher answer these questions.

2. Animal Selection

- Teachers considering an animal must assure that resident animals entering the classroom are healthy and free of transmissible diseases or other problems that may endanger human health.
- Animals that are **unacceptable** as resident animals include:

Wild Animals: For the purpose of this policy, a wild animal is any mammal that is **not** one of the following:

- Domestic dog or cat
- Pet rabbit
- Pet rodent (e.g. mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs)

Poisonous Animals: Spiders, venomous insects, poisonous reptiles (including snakes), and poisonous amphibians.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Wild-dog Hybrids

Stray Animals

Baby Chicks and Ducks

Psittacine Birds

3. **Approval of Resident Animal**

- Prior approval of the principal must be obtained before consideration is given to an animal residing in the school setting. The principal, nurse, and requesting teacher will consider all aspects of this policy prior to approving a study of health risks to students and staff members that will be using the classroom space in which the animal will reside.
- Upon the approval of the principal, the requesting teacher will survey all students and staff using an allergy information form (Appendix A). The teacher should modify the top portion of the form to reflect the animal being considered as a resident animal.
- When all student allergy survey forms have been returned, the principal, nurse, and requesting teacher will review the data and make a final decision regarding the approval of a resident animal. Student allergy forms should be kept on file with the classroom teacher.

4. **Care of Resident Animal**

- The classroom teacher must assume primary responsibility for the humane treatment of the animal while in the classroom. Animals must be properly housed, have adequate food and water, and their habitats must be kept clean.
- The classroom teacher is responsible for developing guidelines for student/animal interaction. These guidelines should include student training on how to handle the animal.
- Education with animals should be used to reemphasize proper hygiene and hand washing recommendations. All children who handle animals should be instructed to wash their hands immediately after handling them.
- Animals should not be allowed in the vicinity of sinks where children wash their hands, in any area where food is prepared, stored, or served, or in areas used for the cleaning or storage of food utensils or dishes.

383-Rule (cont.)

- Children should not be allowed to handle or clean up any form of animal waste (feces, urine, blood, etc.). Animal wastes should be disposed of in accordance with universal precaution's procedures as referenced in the District's Communicable Disease Policy.
- Animals should not be allowed to roam free around the classroom or school.
- If animals are to be kept in the classroom on days when classes are not in session, the teacher must make arrangements for their care and safety. No animals will be housed in the schools during the summer break when school is not in session.
- Any time a resident animal bites or scratches a person, the classroom teacher will notify the building principal, parents, and the animal control officer with the Appleton Police Department. It is the responsibility of the animal control officer to determine if additional measures need to be taken.
- There should be a plan in place to provide for the care of resident animals in the event of an emergency school closing.
- If the teachers and/or principal become aware of potentially harmful health or safety concerns, adverse smells, or disruptive sounds regarding animals in the school, he/she is directed to take appropriate steps, including immediate removal of the animal if necessary.

5. Transportation of Animals:

- Animals may not be transported on school buses with the exception of animals certified to assist persons with disabilities.

C. ANIMAL VISITATION TO SCHOOLS

- From time-to-time there will be a request by a student, parent, PTA, or other organization to allow an animal to visit the school setting. The school principal must approve all requests for such visitation. The same guidelines as those considered when approving a resident animal should be taken into consideration when determining whether an animal visitation may occur.
- Exceptions to the unacceptable list of resident animals may be made under the following circumstances:

-Wild Animals, Poisonous Animals, Reptiles, Psittacine Birds: These animals may be approved in those instances when the wild animals are presented at schools by a professional who has experience handling wildlife, and are displayed in enclosed cages which prevent contact between the animal, staff, and students. *Because of the high incidence of rabies in bats, raccoons, skunks, and wild carnivores, these animals (including recently dead animals) should not be permitted on school grounds under any circumstances.*

D. CERTIFIED SERVICE DOGS

- Dogs that are specifically certified to assist individuals with disabilities will be permitted on District property and at District events. For students, the need for a service dog will be documented in the individual educational plan (IEP). This plan will also include any necessary precautions.

Adoption Date: August 28, 2000

ANIMALS IN THE SCIENCE CLASSROOM

(Addendum to AASD "Animals in the School" Policy)

Live animals in the classroom provide opportunities to learn about diversity, habitat, humane care, animal growth and development, reproduction and behavior. Since this is especially true in science classrooms, where these topics of study have direct connection to the District's science curriculum, this addendum allows for the following modification of the policy at the **middle school and high school levels**, where the ages of the students allow them to be more responsible with live animals.

- **In addition to abiding by the AASD policies concerning animals in the schools, Section B.4 Care of Resident Animal, a teacher must address the following questions before bringing an animal into the classroom:**
 1. Why do I want a classroom pet?
 2. What do I hope to teach my students by having a classroom pet?
 3. Who is ultimately responsible for the upkeep, safety, and welfare of the classroom pet during school hours, during school emergencies, and during periods of time when school is not in session?
 4. Do I have the time needed for the daily upkeep of a classroom pet?
 5. What will happen to the classroom pet if I am no longer able to care for it?
- **B.2 Animal Selection:** Allows keeping amphibians and reptiles provided all appropriate regulations and precautions are followed.
- **B.3 Approval of Resident Animal** is modified to read:

Prior approval of the principal must be obtained before consideration is given to an animal residing in the school setting. The principal and requesting teacher will consider all aspects of the Animal in Schools policy prior to assessing health risks to students and staff members who will be using the classroom space in which the animal will reside.

Upon the approval of the principal, the requesting teacher will survey all students and staff that will be using the classroom space pertaining to potential allergy and health risks. This can be accomplished through a written notice regarding the potential classroom resident animal and requesting concerns should be made known to the teacher. Student health records are also a potential source of needed information.

- **To minimize exposure to animal allergens, school officials should make sure that:**
 1. No student or staff member with a known allergy to an animal be allowed to handle that particular animal.
 2. Only non-allergic persons be designated to perform animal clean-up responsibilities.
 3. If at any time an individual exhibits adverse reactions to an animal, the animal must be removed from the classroom.

Any additional exceptions to the Animals in Schools policy must be made with consultation of the building administrator and the Science Program Leader.

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian:

(Teachers please address the following items in your introductory paragraph):

- ✓ *Type of classroom animal.*
- ✓ *Benefits your classroom animal will have for students.*
- ✓ *Explanation of who is ultimately responsible for the upkeep, safety, and welfare of the classroom animal during school hours and during periods of time when school is not in session.*
- ✓ *How much interaction will the students have with the animal?*
- ✓ *Who should they call if they have questions or concerns?*

In order to ensure the safety of our students, please fill out the information below and return to the school office as soon as possible. A decision to have a resident animal in our classroom will not be made until every child has returned this form. Thank you for your time.

STUDENT ALLERGY INFORMATION

Student's Name _____

Parent's Name _____

NO, my child does not have any known allergies to animals.

YES, my child does have an animal-related allergy.

My child has an allergic reaction to the following animal(s):
(Please be specific as to type of animal, which causes the allergic reaction.)

DATE

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE