

Animals in Schools

Guidelines for Animals in the Classroom or on School Property

Under the proper conditions, animals can be an effective teaching aid. Additionally, there are situations when federal and state statutes require accommodation of dog guides or service animals.

The district also recognizes that there are medical and physical concerns damage associated with animals, both wild and domesticated, in the classroom and/or on school property.

The district's exposure to liability and health and safety concerns regarding animals in school is indefensible. Numerous health and safety concerns have been raised regarding the potential for a child or adult to be bitten, knocked down or scratched. In addition, allergy and cleanliness concerns stemming from possible contact with saliva, vomit or feces contribute to this policy.

The following guidelines apply to all animals in the classroom or on school property.

1. Definitions for the purpose of this directive
 - a. "Animal(s)" means live vertebrates such as mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, and amphibians (e.g., dogs, rats, snakes, cats).
 - b. "Wild animal" means an animal not commonly domesticated and may include birds, reptiles and amphibians (e.g., raccoon, robin).
 - c. "Poisonous animal" means an animal which delivers its poison through bite or scratch in amounts sufficient to cause humans sickness, extreme pain or death (e.g., rattlesnake, brown recluse spider)
 - d. "Dog guide" means a dog that is wearing a dog guide harness and is trained to lead or guide a blind person. (ORS 346.610)
 - e. "Service animal" as defined by the American with Disabilities Act, means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The

crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition. The law and its regulations also make an allowance for miniature horses.

- f. "Person with a physical impairment" means any person who is permanently physically impaired, whose physical impairment limits one or more daily life activities and who has a record of impairment and is regarded by health care practitioners as having such an impairment, requiring the use of a service animal, including but not limited, to blindness, deafness and complete or partial paralysis. (ORS 346.680)
- g. "Public accommodation" means a place of public accommodation as defined in ORS 359A.400, including but not limited to, educational institutions, airlines and restaurants. (ORS 346.610)
- h. Drug-detection dogs as listed in administrative regulation – JFG-AR Student Searches and other police dogs that are trained specifically to assist police and other law-enforcement personnel in their work will be permitted.

2. Access by Persons Requiring an Service Animal

- a. Access to the school by visitors whose physical impairment, as defined in ORS 346.680, requires the use of a service animal shall not be restricted solely due to the presence of the service animal.
- b. Students requiring a service animal as defined in ORS 346.680 will need to contact the principal regarding appropriate accommodation. If the principal receives a request regarding a service animal for a student, the principal will forward the request to the Student Support Services Office for their review and recommendations.

3. Animal "Visitors" in the Classroom

- a. All requests to have animal visitors (e.g., student or staff "show and tell") in the classroom or on school property must be submitted to the principal or designee in writing. The request must be approved before the animal shows up at the school.
- b. 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 animals. Additionally, if applicable, the request should include verification that the animal is properly and currently licensed with the appropriate inoculations. There must be an educational purpose or benefit to allow any type of animal in the school buildings. The principal or designee has the discretion to permit or deny the presence of any animal in the school.
- c. Prior to approving the request, the principal or designee shall determine whether any child has a health condition (such as allergies) that could be exacerbated by exposure to animals. Parents must be notified of the plans to have an animal in the classroom so that accommodations may be made for their student.

4. Length of time animals are allowed in classrooms

Animals will be permitted in classrooms only for a specified and appropriate educational purpose for the time necessary to achieve the educational goal.

5. Teacher Responsibilities for Animals in Classrooms

- a. Treatment of Animals: Teachers must assume the sole responsibility for the humane and proper treatment of any animals in the classroom. 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. The responsibility of animals in the classroom does not end when an animal dies. The teacher must assume the responsibility to dispose properly of all remains.
- b. Exhibits: Each teacher is responsible for the proper supervision and control of students under his/her direction whenever there is an exhibit or activity involving animals in the school.

6. Owner Responsibility

- a. Owners shall be solely responsible for the care/safety of their animals, and for injuries sustained to the animal or to any people due to the presence of the animals at the school.
- b. All animals brought for exhibit must be restrained by their owner/handler.
- c. Owners walking pets on school grounds must follow city or county ordinances regarding leashing and sanitation.
- d. Principals have the authority to exclude persons and their animals during school hours from play fields when he/she determines that there are associated health and/or safety concerns.

7. Limitations

- a. No domesticated mammals, including dogs, cats, primates or livestock shall be allowed in school buildings or grounds while school is in session and nonschool hours unless permitted by the principal and proof of appropriate and/or current rabies/distemper vaccinations are provided. This limitation applies to faculty, staff and student pets as well as those of the public.
- b. No wild animals including skunks, raccoons, bats, squirrels, monkeys, amphibians or birds shall be allowed unless under the control of an individual trained in the care and management of the animals (i.e., zookeepers, veterinarians, etc.)
- c. No poisonous animals are allowed, unless brought in cages/containers that prevent contact with student and staff members.
- d. No animals will be allowed free range in the facility or grounds. The “resident” school dog, cat or other large animal, whether kenneled or allowed to roam free, will not be permitted.
- e. Aquariums with fish only that are currently in the school buildings will be permitted. However, they will not be permitted after June 30, 2011.

8. Injuries

Staff members or students who have been bitten or otherwise injured by an animal shall report such incident to the principal and the school nurse/designee immediately. The principal shall notify the parents in the case of student injury. The person most knowledgeable about the incident shall complete an incident report and forward it to the business office.