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SUBJECT: ANIMALS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

The purpose of this policy is to provide information to promote safety for faculty, students, and the community when animals are brought onto school property and to provide guidance about which animals pose a public health threat in a school setting.

Prohibited Animals

The following animals are prohibited from school property as they present a significant health risk:

1. Wild Animals and Domestic Stray Animals - Wild animals pose a risk for transmitting rabies as well as other zoonotic diseases (disease which can be transmitted from animals to people) and, therefore, should not be allowed in schools or handled by staff and children. Because of the high incidence of rabies in bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes and other wild carnivores, these animals should not be permitted on school grounds under any circumstances (including dead animals).
2. Poisonous Animals -Venomous insects and spiders, poisonous snakes, reptiles and lizards may be prohibited for safety reasons.
3. Unvaccinated Pet Dogs, Cats, Ferrets and Farm Animals.
4. Bat Houses - Bats pose a high risk for transmitting rabies. Bat houses should not be installed on school grounds.

Guidelines for Other Animals

Some animals, as presented in this section, may be allowed on school property with the authorization of the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. Any animal that is allowed in the school or on school grounds must be clean and healthy so that the risk of their transmitting disease to students and teachers is minimal. Any education with animals should also be used to re-emphasize proper hygiene and hand washing recommendations.

No animals should be allowed in food preparation areas at any time. Food handlers should not be responsible for clean-up of animal wastes, and cages and tanks should not be cleaned in food handling areas.

Animal cages or tanks should be cleaned thoroughly on a regular basis. Students may be allowed to handle or clean up any form of animal waste (feces, urine, blood, etc.) under adult supervision. Wastes should be disposed of in a plastic bag or container with a lid. Anyone who cleans a cage or tank should wash their hands immediately after completing the task.

Children with allergies or those with immune deficiencies may be especially susceptible to diseases transmitted by animals or allergic reactions; therefore, special precautions may be needed to

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minimize risks. Consultation with the school nurse and the child's parents about precautionary measures is strongly advised.

Animals for Educational Purposes

The Board of Education, in recognizing the educational uses of animals in the classroom, requires that permission be obtained from the building principal before animals are brought to the school or classrooms. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that there is appropriate educational purpose if any animal is housed in a classroom. Animals are not to be transported on school buses. All mammals must have had a rabies inoculation thirty (30) days prior to a school visit. Documentation must accompany mammals to schools.

Animals brought to school must be properly housed, cared for and handled. Only the teacher of those students designated by the teacher are to handle the animals.

It shall be the responsibility of the principal and his/her designee to develop a plan of care for those animals housed in school in the event of an emergency school closing or in the event the animals remain in the classroom on days when school is not in session.

All experiments using live animals must have prior approval of the principal and be conducted in accordance with educationally approved guidelines.

Participation in Experiments Involving Animals

The Board of Education recognizes that a student may have a moral, religious and/or philosophical objection to the dissection of animals. A written request from the parent/legal guardian of the student wishing an exemption from the dissection activities will be submitted to the teacher, indicating the reasons for the exemption. A committee comprising the principal, guidance counselor and classroom teacher will review the request and may seek an interview with the student and/or parent/legal guardian in order to secure additional information to better act on the request. Students will not be discriminated against because of their decision to refrain from dissection activities.

If the student's request for exemption is granted, an appropriate alternative educational activity, which is closely related to and of equal rigor as the exempted activity, will be assigned in lieu of the classroom dissection; and the student will be responsible for and evaluated on the material covered in the alternate activity. The alternate activity will carry the same credit as the laboratory dissection.

Allowable Animals with Prior Permission and for Educational Purposes Only

1. Birds - Psittacosis is a serious disease that infected birds can transmit to humans. Even birds that appear healthy can be carriers of this disease. Because of the risk of psittacosis, birds (especially parrots, parakeets, macaws, pigeons, doves, etc.) should not be handled by children and should never be allowed to fly free in the classroom.

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2. Reptiles and Amphibians - Reptiles (iguanas, snakes, lizards and turtles) and amphibians (frogs, salamanders and toads) can spread salmonella to humans, resulting in diarrhea and fever. This disease can be life-threatening in very young children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems. Pregnant women or individuals with infants at home should not handle these animals. Anyone handling a reptile or amphibian should wash their hands thoroughly, immediately following contact.

3. Chickens and Ducks - Chickens and ducks can spread salmonella to humans. This disease can be life-threatening in very young children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems. Pregnant women or individuals with infants at home should not handle these animals. Anyone handling chickens or ducks should wash their hands thoroughly, immediately following contact.

4. Guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, rabbits - Healthy guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils and rabbits pose a limited health risk. Such animals may be allowed as classroom pets or as occasional visitors with advance notification to the principal and teacher and under the strict supervision of an adult. Even tame animals may react aggressively in strange situations; therefore, student contact with animals should always be closely supervised and animals should not be allowed to run loose in the classroom. Children should not be allowed to "kiss" these animals. They may be allowed to handle or clean up any form of animal's waste or clean the animal's cage under adult supervision. Anyone handling such animals should wash their hands thoroughly, immediately following contact.

5. Fish - Fish pose a very limited health risk and may be allowed in the classroom. Disposable gloves should be worn when cleaning aquariums. Tank water should not be disposed of in sinks that are used for food preparation or drinking water.

6. Vaccinated Dogs, Cats, Ferrets and Farm Animals with proof of current vaccination

7. Law Enforcement Dogs-- These animals may be allowed in school or on school grounds with proof of current vaccination.

Pets on School Grounds

Domesticated dogs may be allowed on school grounds without prior permission under the following restrictions:

1. Owners shall be solely responsible for the care/safety of their dog, and for injuries sustained to the dog or to any people, due to the presence of the dog at the school.

2. Owners walking their dogs on school grounds must follow all Village and Town ordinances regarding leashing and sanitation. All dogs will have license and vaccination tags affixed to them while on school property.

3. No dogs will be allowed within 100 ft of a school building or outside areas where children are located while school is in session between the hours of 7:00 am and 3:30 pm. The John Story Trail is

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an exception to this rule but care must be taken to avoid contact between students and dogs while using the trail.

4. No dogs will be allowed within the Mike Nicholas field complex or within playground areas.

5. All dogs will be maintained on a leash and the owner will carry the appropriate materials to clean up waste.

6. The administration has the authority to exclude persons and their dogs from school property when it is determined that there are associated health and/or safety concerns.

Implementing and Communicating the Animal Policy

To effectively protect students and staff, this Animal Policy must be followed by the entire school community. Parents, teachers, school nurses and other staff must be informed of the policy and know of its provisions.

28 CFR §§ 35.104, 35.136, 35.139

Adoption date: 3/16/17