

ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM OR ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

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

General Guidelines

1. Animals may NOT be housed in classrooms or anywhere on school property.
2. Their use shall be restricted to presentation activities in an assembly or a classroom.
3. Such programs should be conducted by people properly trained in animal care (i.e., zoo keepers, docents, veterinarians, etc.).
4. Students' pets are not permitted on school property.
5. Medical necessity (e.g., blind student) may create an exceptional case and will be clarified by an IEP or 504 Plan.

The following pertain to acceptable use of animals:

- All requests (including after school enrichment or summer recreation programs) to have animals in the classroom or on school property must be submitted to the principal in writing. 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 animal. The principal has the discretion to permit or deny the presence of animals.
- Parents/guardians must be notified in writing prior to any activity involving animals.
- Students and teachers with allergies must receive special consideration before animals are brought into a school. Prior to any exposure to animals in school, the teacher should be aware of any conditions such as allergies which could be exacerbated by exposure to animals. Appropriate and reasonable accommodations will be accorded to protect the health of such individuals.
- All requests to take field trips involving animals must be submitted to the principal in writing. In determining whether to grant the request, the principal shall be guided by the district policy on field trips and shall also take into consideration any known allergies among the students and the possible side effects of the planned exposure to animals.
- No domesticated mammals, including dogs, cats, primates or livestock, shall be allowed in schools unless proof of appropriate and/or current rabies vaccination is provided. Any pet that is too young to be immunized for rabies will not be handled by students.

- No wild animals (e.g., skunks, raccoons, badgers, lynx, bobcats, bats, ground hogs, monkeys, coyotes, fox, etc.) shall be allowed unless under the control of an individual trained in the care and management of the animals (i.e., zoo keepers, docents, veterinarians, etc.).
- All animals brought for exhibit must be restrained by the owner/handler.
- No poisonous animals are allowed unless brought in cages/containers that prevent contact with student and faculty.
- 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.
- Animals will *not* be allowed to be housed in classrooms.
- Each teacher is responsible for the proper control of animals brought to the classroom for instructional purposes, including the effective protection of students. This includes keeping the animals in appropriate cages or containers for the protection of the animal and individual.
- No animal will be allowed free range in the facility.
- Supervised hand washing for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and water will be conducted by students after handling animals. Hand washing will be conducted immediately after the activity has ended and prior to any further school or classroom activity. Eating/drinking will not be allowed during the animal exhibition or during activities involving animals.
- The principal, nurse, and parent/guardian must be notified as soon as possible if an individual is bitten by an animal or any incident occurs which could have an adverse effect on physical or emotional health. The supervising teacher will complete a written report describing the incident.

Procedures in the Event of Scratch or Bite by an Animal

If, in spite of all precautions, someone is scratched or bitten, teachers will follow the procedure below:

1. Prevent further injury.
2. Report the occurrence immediately to the school nurse and the principal, who shall see that the person receives first aid and that parents/guardians are notified.
3. Impound the animal – particularly in “bite” cases since rabies is always a possibility.
4. While it is the examining physician’s responsibility to notify the board of health of possible contagion, it is also a responsibility of the nurse, principal, Chief School Administrator, and parent/guardian – to see that all notifications are given, and that animals are held for observation until contrary instructions are received.

Procedures for the Protection of Animals

The following regulations are established to protect the live animals used in school studies or programs:

1. A teacher or other qualified adult supervisor must assume primary responsibility for the purposes and conditions of any program that involves live animals. If the school faculty does not include persons with training in the proper care of animals, the services of such a person on a consulting basis should be sought. Often a local veterinarian will offer this kind of help.
2. Each program involving animals should have as a clearly defined objective for the teaching of some biological principle(s).
3. All animals used must be lawfully acquired in accordance with state and local laws.
4. The health of the animal used in any study shall be a concern of the teacher and/or student investigator. Gentle handling, proper feeding, and provision of sanitary and temporary quarters (e.g., carrying case or cage) shall be strictly observed.
5. Animals may NOT be housed in the classroom or school overnight.
6. The principal must approve the inclusion of all animals in any school program or classroom activity. The owners of all animals that by law must be registered and have certificates of inoculation, must provide proof of the above stated certificate to the principal and inviting person(s) (e.g., enrichment or recreation programs).

Date: January 19, 2009