

2560 LIVE ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

The Board of Education recognizes the appropriate use of live animals as instructional resources can enrich the educational program. The observation and nurture of live animals can help children learn specific biological and behavioral principles and gain respect for all living things.

A staff member who uses live animals shall observe proper precautions for the safety of students and the animals. The Principal or designee must approve a live animal being brought into the school building and the use of any animal in a course of instruction or the establishment of an animal habitat in a classroom.

Any animal used in school must have been lawfully acquired in accordance with applicable State law and local ordinance. An animal susceptible to rabies must have been vaccinated against rabies and proof of such vaccination must be included with the request to bring a live animal into the school submitted to the Principal or designee before a live animal is brought onto school grounds or into a school building. No animal shall be permitted in any area of the school where a student who is allergic to the animal might be exposed to the animal.

A teacher or other qualified adult must assume primary responsibility for the animal, its nourishment, and its sanitary living conditions. The staff member in charge must make proper arrangements for the animal's care and feeding over weekends, holidays, and school vacation periods.

No experiment that deprives a living animal of nourishment or exposes the animal to harm shall be conducted.

A student in Kindergarten through grade twelve may refuse to dissect, vivisection, incubate, capture, or otherwise harm or destroy animals or any parts thereof as part of a course of instruction. In the event the school program will require any such activities, the school will notify the student and parent(s) or legal guardian(s) at the beginning of each school year of the right to decline participation in such activities. Within two weeks of the receipt of the notice from the school, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) shall notify the school if the right to decline participation in such activities will be exercised. Any student who chooses to refrain from participation in or observation of such activities shall be offered an alternative education project for the purpose of providing the student with the factual knowledge, information, or experience required by the course of study. A student may refuse to participate in an alternative education project which

PROGRAM

2560/page 2 of 2

Live Animals in School

involves or necessitates any harmful use of an animal or animal part(s). A student shall not be discriminated against, in grading or in any other manner, based upon a decision to exercise the rights afforded pursuant to this act.

Any staff member who requests to have a certified therapy dog present on school grounds during the school day and actively involved in instructional time with students shall make their request in writing to the Principal. The written request shall include: a description of the dog, including its breed, age, size, health issues/medications and any history of aggression; all required local and/or State registration licenses; proof of all required immunizations/vaccinations; the proposed dates/class periods the dog will be present; and a detailed explanation of the educational benefit the dog will provide students. The staff member shall submit the written request to the Principal who shall conduct an initial review with the staff member. The Principal shall submit the request and review the findings of the initial review with the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall make a final determination regarding the request after consulting with the Board Attorney.

If approved: the Superintendent shall provide the Principal with any and all terms of the dog's involvement in the educational program; the dog's owner shall submit a certificate of insurance naming the Board of Education as additional insured for any liability related to the dog being on school grounds; and the Principal shall send written notification to the parents of all students in the school building regarding the presence of a dog on school grounds. The staff member must submit the written request on an annual basis prior to the beginning of each school year.

N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.2

Adopted: 7 December 2009

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