Greater Essex County District School Board

Policy: Animals (Live) in the Classroom/School

Reference No: P-AD-39

Live Animals, when well cared for in the classroom, offer learning opportunities to students. The Animals for Research Act (R.S.O. 1990) (the “Act”) governs the care of animals in a registered research facility. The Board will not establish an Animal Care Committee, as described in the Act. As a result, only animals as specified in the Regulation to the Policy are allowed in schools, where permitted by municipal law.

This policy is separate from and not related to a student’s use of service animals in the school to support the student’s learning needs.

Activities such as 4H Clubs or Co-operative Education placements off school site are exempted from this Policy.

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1. Overview

1.1. The Animals for Research Act (R.S.P. 1990) governs the care of animals in a registered research facility.
1.2. This Regulation provides assistance in the selection of suitable animal species and guidelines for appropriate care of animals care of animals in the classroom.
1.3. Teachers who have live animals in the classroom are subject to this Regulation.

2. Animals Permitted on School Site for One Day or Less:

Only the following animals are permitted on the school site:

2.1. Reptiles – except for poisonous or constrictor snakes, or any type of turtle (unless in a case)

3. Amphibians – except for any poisonous amphibians

Animals Permitted on the School Site for More than One Day:

3.1. Fish for display purposes only.
3.2. Invertebrates (insects, arachnids, crustaceans, mollusks, echinoderms (starfish)) are allowed except those which are poisonous or sting (e.g. bees, wasps) and to remain inside the container for display purposes only.
3.3. Service dogs for students are regulated under the policy/regulation AD-31 Certified Service Animals for Students.

4. General Animal Care Procedures

It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to provide supports so that any animal that is kept in the classroom receives adequate care and is not abused or neglected in any way. This means that there shall be sufficient food and water available, that the animal's habitat is kept clean, and that the animal is handled and supervised in the proper fashion.

Teachers must request permission from their principal before animals are permitted in the classroom. Permission Form (MyGEC- forms)

Specifically:

Container Cleaning

4.1. All tanks, containers etc. used for the housing of animals therein:

4.1.1. Shall be kept as free of excreta and waste as is necessary for the health and comfort of every animal;

4.1.2. Shall be cleaned and sanitized as often as is necessary for the comfort and health of every animal.

4.1.3. Every Container for food or water shall be kept in a sanitary condition.

Knowledge of housing and feeding requirements for specific animals is the responsibility of the teacher. Animal care procedures should be posted and reviewed with the students.

5. Precautions and Responsibilities

5.1. Do not let animals roam freely.

5.2. Bites and Scratches

To guard against bites and scratches, it is wise to use gloves when handling any animal. Wash hands thoroughly after handling animals.

However, accidents do occur, and the teacher and the school principal must be prepared to deal with bites and scratches that students might receive while handling the animals.

5.2.1. Superficial wounds that do not break the skin are not normally a problem as long as the animal involved is healthy.

5.2.2. If a scratch or bite breaks the surface of the skin, immediately clean the affected area and report the incident to the Principal. The Principal shall have the parent/guardian contacted regarding the incident.

5.2.3. Significant wounds should be checked by a doctor.

In all cases, the animal involved should be kept for several days after a bite or scratch incident in case medical or veterinary officials wish to observe or test the animal.

5.3. Care of Animals – Non- school Days

Before an animal is permitted in the classroom, the teacher shall ensure that a plan is in place to provide care on weekends, extended weekends, and holiday periods.

5.4. Removal of Unwanted Animals

When the time for classroom study is ended, a permanent home for the animal must be arranged.

5.5. Disposal of Animal Waste

Teachers must have a plan for the disposal of animal waste.

Custodians are not responsible for the care and clean-up of animals in the classrooms.

6. Appropriate Learning Experiences

6.1. Teachers should have a definite purpose for permitting live animals (as defined) into the classroom, as approved by the Principal.