



Book	POLICY MANUAL
Section	400 STUDENTS
Title	Animals in the Classroom and on School Premises
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The presence of animals in the schools provides opportunities for addressing academic standards and supporting the social/emotional growth of students. Live animals are part of our natural environment and can provide opportunities to learn about diversity, habitat, humane care, animal growth and development, reproduction and behavior.

The presence of animals in schools may also pose a safety or health risk for some students when they are exposed to some allergens that activate allergy and/or asthma symptoms. Other students may be afraid of animals and feel emotionally unsafe in their presence. Approval of an animal in the classroom, on school premises, or at a school sponsored activity may be denied or revoked by the District.

District procedures must be followed when live animals are brought into the school/classroom setting. The principal must receive permission from the Director of Student Services or Superintendent prior to any animal arriving at school. The following steps must be followed:

The **teacher** must:

1. Request permission from the principal who will in turn request permission from the Director of Student Services or Superintendent.
2. Once permission is received, the teacher will notify parents/guardians in writing, prior to the animal being brought to school. Individual student emergency cards solicit information related to allergies to animals. If any individual exhibits adverse reactions to the animal, the animal must be removed immediately.
3. Notify building staff members of the animal's presence if s/he will be near or handling the animal. As applicable, staff members must also be allowed to verify that they have any known allergies or documented fear to the animal.
4. Ensure that all staff, students and visitors thoroughly wash their hands immediately after handling animals to prevent the spread of disease.
5. Only bring an animal known to be in good health and appropriately immunized.
6. Make provisions for the care and maintenance of the animal during the period of time when school is not in session (weekends, vacations, evenings, as appropriate).

Animals must be humanely and properly housed in cages, aquariums, etc., specific for the species. Animal cages, aquariums, etc., and the surrounding areas must be meticulously maintained and completely cleaned at least weekly. Animal waste and materials from animal cages, aquariums, etc., will be removed and disposed in an appropriate manner. Waste materials from animals should be bagged separately, sealed and marked 'animal waste'. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure proper housing and waste clean up.

**Animals will not:**

1. Be at large in the classrooms or in the building.
2. Be permitted in areas where food is prepared or served.
3. Be transported on school buses or vans.

The following animals should **not** be brought onto school properties unless it aligns to curriculum, is under the care and direct supervision of a trained professional with appropriate licenses, certifications, and/or permits, and with prior permission from the Director of Student Services or Superintendent:

1. Wildlife animals
2. Psittacine birds (parrots and parakeets)
3. Venomous insects
4. Venomous arachnids (spiders and scorpions)
5. \*Amphibians (frogs, toads, newts, and salamanders)
6. Venomous reptiles (snakes and lizards)
7. \*Non-venomous reptiles (turtles, snakes, iguanas, and alligators)
8. Venomous stinging, toxin excreting fish (scorpion fish, stone fish, and boxfish)

\*No reptiles or amphibians will be permitted in grades EC through 5<sup>th</sup>. In grades 6-12, reptiles and amphibians will be permitted, but must be maintained in a science laboratory or classroom, or by persons who are knowledgeable in reptiles and amphibians.

The following animals are considered appropriate class pets/resident pets:

1. Fish
2. Gerbils
3. Hamsters
4. Mice
5. Rabbits
6. Guinea pets

If any individual is bitten or scratched by an animal and the skin is broken, the affected area must be cleaned thoroughly with soap and water, and then reported to the principal and the individual's parent/guardian. When appropriate, Public Health authorities will be notified to determine the appropriate action to follow.

Students may bring pets for show and tell, unit study, etc., for a limited time. Prior permission must be obtained from the principal, who will in turn seek permission from the Director of Student Services or Superintendent. The owner/parent/guardian must remain with the animal and provide supervision during its entire stay at school. in addition, the owner/parent/guardian and staff verification forms stipulations noted above must be met prior to the animal's visit to the classroom.

Non-domestic animals, ferrets or wolf hybrid dogs may not be brought to school. Exceptions may be made for exhibits and presentations by recognized agencies that have programs specifically designed for schools or children in public settings.

The use of dead organs and tissues for dissection units is permitted as defined in the curriculum. All animals or animal parts being used for dissection must be purchased from a reputable biological dealer. No dead animals or animal parts may be brought into schools unless preserved through a professional taxidermist.

### **Procedures for Formal Request for Service Animals**

1. A request for the individual with a disability to be accompanied by a service animal must be submitted by the student/family in writing at least ten (10) school days prior to bringing the service animal to school or to the activity/event, or as soon as practicable if ten (10) days' notice is not possible. Requests from students or parents/guardians should be submitted to the Director of Student Services. Requests shall state whether the service animal is required because of a disability.
2. The Director of Student Services will inform the appropriate building administrator of the request to have a service animal on the premises and address any questions that they have regarding the presence of the animal at the site. The Superintendent will also be notified of the request.
3. A student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team or Section 504 Team may meet to discuss whether use of the service animal is necessary for a free appropriate public education and/or whether the student requires assistance handling the animal. If a student requesting to use a service animal at school is not currently identified

as having a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504, the District and the family may consider a referral under the IDEA or Section 504.

4. The Director of Student Services will respond to the request with final approval or denial in writing within five (5) school days from the date the request is submitted, although this timeline may be modified if additional information is needed in order to respond to the request. If the request is denied, the individual may appeal that decision in writing to the Superintendent within two (2) school days of receiving the denial.
5. If the request is approved, the Director of Student Services will provide notification to other individuals directly impacted, in addition to the building administrator and the Superintendent. This notification will provide the opportunity to address any medical (e.g., allergies) or other concerns that may result.

**If a request is approved, the Director of Student Services will communicate the following responsibilities to the student/family. The individual to be accompanied by a service animal is generally responsible for the following:**

1. Using a harness, leash, or other tether to handle the animal, unless either the handler is unable to because of the disability to use a tether, or the use of the tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means).
2. Caring for and supervising the service animal, including walking the animal, feeding the animal, and responding to the animal's need to relieve itself.
3. Ensuring that the service animal is licensed and up to date on vaccinations as required by state law or local ordinance. All vaccinations must be current. Dogs must wear a rabies vaccination tag. See Wisconsin Statutes 95.21(2)(f).
4. Ensuring the service animal is housebroken.
5. Treating the animal for, and keeping the animal free from, fleas and ticks.
6. Cleaning and grooming the animal to reduce shedding and dander.
7. The District strongly recommends that the individual obtain liability insurance coverage for any harm or injury caused by the animal to other students, staff, visitors, and/or property.
8. If an animal must be separated from the individual whom the animal is accompanying, it is the responsibility of that person or student's family to arrange for the care and supervision of the animal during the period of separation.

**Approval of a service animal request may be denied or revoked for the following reasons:**

1. The animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action or control it.
2. The animal is not housebroken.
3. The animal's presence would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.
4. The animal provides a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be mitigated by reasonable modifications of policies, procedures, or practices.

**If denied, the individual with a disability shall be given the opportunity to participate in the program, service, or activity without having the animal on the premises.**