

Adopted: 10/18/09

*Policy 441 L
Orig. 2009*

Revised:

441L LIVE ANIMALS AT THE SCHOOL SITE AND / OR IN THE CLASSROOM

I. PURPOSE

Public concern that students and staff of the school district be able to attend school without suffering serious allergic reaction requires that the School Board adopt measures effectively responding to health concerns related to live animals on campus while respecting the rights of all students, employees, and contractors, including those who are so afflicted. The purpose of this policy is to adopt such measures.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. The School Board recognizes that under proper conditions, animals may provide a valuable learning experience.. The School Board also recognizes that there are medical and physical dangers associated with animals, in the classroom and/or on school property. Maintaining an animal in a classroom merely as a classroom pet is forbidden. The following guidelines and procedures are adopted regarding all animals in the classroom or on school property. Presence of an animal shall be temporary. Animals shall not be allowed into a classroom where a child with a known allergy is educated.

B. Exception: This policy allows for practice as provided for under Minnesota Human Rights Act, Minnesota Statutes Section 363A.19 (a) and canines used in school safety searches.

III. GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

A. GUIDELINES

1 All requests to have animals in the classroom or on school property must be submitted to the principal or his or her designee 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, or designee, has the discretion to permit or deny the presence of animals.

2. Upon approval of the animal's visit to the classroom by the principal, the teacher shall notify in writing parents of all students regarding the animal's visit. In the note, the teacher shall request that parents inform the teacher of any known allergies the child may have to the animal.

3. No domesticated mammals, such as dogs, cats, primates, or livestock, shall be allowed in schools unless proof of appropriate and/or current rabies vaccination is provided. Students will not handle any domesticated mammal that is too young to be immunized for rabies. The teacher or classroom supervisor must be present when animals are handled by students.

4. Students, staff and others with allergies must receive special consideration before animals are brought into a school. Prior to any exposure to animals in school, the teacher must make himself or herself aware of any condition 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. At no time will the afflicted individual's education be compromised so that an animal can be brought to campus.

5. No wild animals (skunks, raccoons, badgers, lynx, bobcats, bats, snakes, monkeys, coyotes fox, etc.) shall be allowed unless under the control of a professional trained in the care and management of the animals (zookeepers, docents, veterinarians, etc.).

6. All animals brought for exhibition must kept on restraint by the owner/handler.

7. No poisonous animals are allowed.

8. Service dogs are allowed on school property, including school buses, as specified in MN Statute 256C.02

9. If at any time the indoor air quality coordinator for the district determines that an animal(s) or plant(s) is causing an indoor air quality problem, the animal(s) or plant(s) shall be removed and not return to any school campus.

B. BACKGROUND:

1. Asthma is said to be a leading cause of school absences. Time lost from school negatively affects grades, academic achievement, self-esteem, and future life successes.
2. The United States Environmental Protection Agency has published a special document related to asthma in the schools that includes the following statements:
 - Fur-bearing and warm-blooded animals including gerbils, birds, cats, dogs, mice and rats may trigger or exacerbate asthma episodes.
 - Proteins, which act as allergens in the dander, urine, or saliva of these warm-blooded animals may sensitize individuals and can cause allergic reactions or trigger asthma episodes. If an animal is present in the school, there is a possibility of direct, daily exposure to the animal's dander and bodily fluids.

- Even after extensive cleaning, pet allergen levels may stay in the indoor environment for several months after the animal is removed.
- The most effective method to controlling exposure to animal allergens in schools is to keep schools free of feathered or furred animals.

C. PROCEDURES

1. Purpose of Procedures: The purpose of having procedures for the presence of animals in the district schools is:
 - a. To decrease student exposure to potentially harmful allergens;
 - b. To protect the wellbeing of the animals.
 - c. To provide a safe environment for students, staff and others.
 - d. To inform staff regarding precautions and necessary conditions regarding animals, and to provide a basic minimum standard district-wide.
2. It is the responsibility of the teacher to provide care of animals. No animals shall be housed at school unless the animal is central to the curriculum of the course and the teacher knows the appropriate care, feeding, and handling of the animals. The teacher must clean up all waste products using a germicidal cleaner. Students will not clean up nor have direct contact with animal waste products.
3. 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 on restraint or in appropriate cages or containers for the protection of the animal and individuals.
4. No animals will be allowed free range in the facility. No animal shall roam the hallways off restraint. No animal shall leave the classroom unless the owner / handler is in control of the animal which must be caged or leashed.
5. 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.
6. The principal, school nurse and parent/guardian shall be notified immediately if an animal bites an individual 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. The animal shall be removed immediately and shall not return.
7. Turtles, birds, snakes or other animals which might present a health hazard shall not be allowed without the approval of the principal, and then only for class observation and study for a limited period of time.

8. Science teachers may have animals in appropriate facilities in, or adjacent to, laboratories for the purpose of class study and experimentation, provided that the utmost care is taken to prevent accident and/or suffering to the animals. The procedures of this policy must be followed at all times.
9. Animals are not to be transported on school buses, except for service dogs.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 256C.02 (Public accommodations)