

POLICY REGARDING RESPONSIBLE
USE OF ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM

Policy

The Board of Education encourages the observation of and the experimentation with living organisms in order to give students unique perspectives of life processes that are not provided by other modes of instruction. Studying animals in the classroom enables students to develop skills of observation and comparison, a sense of stewardship, and an appreciation for the unity, interrelationships, and complexity of life. This study, however, requires appropriate, humane care of the organism.

Carefully developed dissection laboratories can lead to an increased appreciation of living things. Such activities demonstrate the complexity of organisms and highlight the structures and processes that interrelate living things. These activities can promote and support substantive understanding of the structure, function, and classification of organisms.

It is understood that there are individuals who have personal beliefs opposed to dissection. Those who teach and promote the teaching of science need to be sensitive to the views of students and their rights to their beliefs.

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Revised: 7/16/02

Regulations

Live Animals

Teachers are expected to be knowledgeable about the proper care of organisms under study and the safety of their students and adhere to the following guidelines:

- Animals to be maintained in the classroom must be obtained from and certified as healthy by licensed animal suppliers.
- Acquisition and care of animals must be appropriate to the species.
- Student class work and science projects involving animals must be under the supervision of a science teacher or other trained professional.
- Teachers sponsoring or supervising the use of animals in instructional activities, including acquisition, care and disposition, will adhere to local, state and national laws, policies and regulations regarding the organisms.
- Teachers must instruct students on safety precautions for handling live animals.
- Plans for the future care of animals at the conclusion of the study must be developed and implemented.
- Laboratory activities must be conducted with consideration and appreciation for the organism.
- Laboratory activities must be based on carefully planned objectives.
- Laboratory objectives must be appropriate to the maturity level of the student.
- All animal bites, stings or scratches shall be reported immediately to the school nurse, Principal, and a local health authority should be consulted for advice. Teachers shall inform the parents/guardian of the injury and complete a student accident report form.

Restrictions

- Any animal causing an allergic reaction in a student or staff member must be removed from the classroom or, if necessary, from the building.
- Venomous or vicious animals or known carriers of the rabies virus are prohibited.
- Birds shall not be kept in schools unless they have been tested and certified as psittacosis-free.
- Known carriers of salmonella shall not be kept in a classroom unless the supplier provides written documentation that the animal is salmonella-free.
- Wild animals shall not be brought into the classroom unless they are under the direct supervision of a trained representative of a conservation agency or public zoo.

Regulations cont'd.

Dissection of Preserved Specimens

Dissection activities must be conducted with respect and appreciation for the organism in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Dissection activities must be carefully developed and implemented to align specific teaching objectives with the student's maturity level.
- Specimens for dissection activities will be selected from domesticated species, commercially raised and prepared for such purposes.
- Dissection activities must be conducted in a clean and organized work space using proper laboratory procedures and equipment.
- Should it be determined that an alternative to dissection would be a better solution for a given student, a meaningful alternative activity of equivalent grade value will be provided for the student. This activity may include a pictorial or audio-visual analysis of animal anatomy, library research with documentation, or other meaningful project developed by the teacher.
- The disposal of all animal tissue remains must be carried out using appropriate hygienic procedures.

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Reference

- The National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Position Statement and Background Paper, published December 1991/ January 1992.