

IMG - ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS

The school district recognizes that animals have a part in the learning experience in schools; however, for students and staff, animals can aggravate or trigger medical conditions. Other consequences include scratches, bites, infections, and infestations. This policy is intended to permit the presence of animals in schools, safeguard the health and safety of students, staff, and visitors, and assure the humane treatment and protection of animals.

Subject to the administrative procedures set out in this policy, animals may be brought into schools for measurable educational purposes only. By "educational purposes," it is meant that the presence of animals directly supports the learning objectives of the approved educational program of the School Board and the State of Maine.

In all cases where an animal is to be introduced into the school setting, it will be done with sufficient prior approval from the Principal. The Principal or classroom teacher will notify parents/guardians so that any health concerns can be addressed in advance. Parents/guardians should bring any related health concerns to the attention of the Principal.

The School Board will allow animals in the schools or on school property under the following circumstances:

1. Permission must be obtained from the Principal before animals are brought into the school by anyone. Before the Principal gives permission for an animal to be in a classroom, the following documentation must be provided when appropriate:
 - Proof of liability insurance coverage by the animal's owner must be provided. The primary liability for the animal's behavior must be assumed by the owner.
 - The vaccination history of the animal, including proof of current rabies and distemper vaccinations when appropriate,
 - Proof of current licensure where appropriate.
 - Current certificate from a veterinarian that the animal is healthy and disease free.
 - Dog owners or trainers must provide a certificate of advanced obedience training, therapy training, and/or service training.

A file that includes all documentation will be kept in the Principal's and Superintendent's Offices. Except under special circumstances as determined by the Principal, there may be only one dog in a school at any given time.

2. The teacher or principal are responsible for the proper control of non-service animals brought into the classroom or school building. This includes keeping the animals in appropriate cages, containers, on leashes. No animal will be allowed free range in any part of the school and/or school grounds.
3. Animals that are to be in the school for more than a day need to be safely and humanely maintained in the appropriate clean cage, terrarium or' aquarium. There will be a written care plan developed by the staff member and approved by the

Principal for the care, use, and/or disposal of the animal. This plan will be on file in the Principal's and Superintendent's Offices. Any animals or cages emitting odors must be cleaned or removed.

4. No wild animals will be allowed in school unless they are under the control of an individual trained in the care and management of the animal and properly licensed by state or federal agencies as appropriate (i.e., zoo keepers, veterinarians, biologists).
5. Any agency bringing in animals outside the school day must comply with the terms of this policy.

SERVICE ANIMALS

The term "service animal" is defined as a dog that has been or is being specially trained by a person who is qualified as a trainer of assistance dogs to aid a disabled student and includes guide dogs for the visually impaired, hearing dogs for the hearing impaired, and service dogs for the physically disabled. An individual trainer should be affiliated with a national organization and should have passed their training criteria.

Only service animals protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act may be brought into school on a full-time basis. We have an obligation to serve students and staff who have physical handicaps or other health conditions in order to maximize their access to the educational program. Principals must be notified whenever "service animals" are brought into schools.

Appropriate school site and district personnel will develop an individual educational plan that incorporates the use of a service dog into the educational program of the student with disabilities. Such a plan should include an orientation for others in the building as appropriate. The district shall not assume or take custody or control of, or responsibility for, any service dog or the care or feeding thereof. The owner or the person having custody and control of the dog shall be liable for any damage to persons, premises, property, or facilities caused by the dog, including, but not limited to, clean up, stain removal, etc.

If, in the judgment of the building principal or authorized designee, any service dog is out of control in the school setting or during district transportation, the matter shall be immediately reported to local law enforcement, and the permission granted pursuant to this policy, may be immediately revoked. The parent or guardian of the student having custody and control of the dog will be required to remove the dog from District premises immediately.

Allergies

If any student or staff member assigned to the classroom in which an assistance dog is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the dog, the person having custody and control of the dog will be required to remove the dog to a different location designated by the building principal or designee and an alternative plan will be developed in coordination with appropriate district staff. This will also apply if an individual on school

transportation suffers an allergic reaction. In this case, an alternative plan will be developed in coordination with appropriate school, district, and transportation staff.

When a student will be accompanied by an assistance dog at school or in other district facilities on a regular basis, such staff member or such student's parent or guardian, as well as the dog's owner and any other person who will have custody and control of the dog will be required to sign a document stating that they have read and understood the policy.

Transportation of Dogs

Animals shall not be transported on school buses except for service animals.

Injuries and Animal Bites

The principal, nurse and parent/guardian must be notified immediately if an animal bites an individual or any incident occurs which could have an adverse effect on the physical or emotional health of students, staff or visitors. An injury report must also be completed and forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools within twenty-four (24) hours. Local public health authorities and the Bureau of Health also need to be contacted by the building principal, as appropriate.

Non-Authorized /Out of Control Animals

No pets are allowed on playing fields at sporting events. Owners will be required to keep their animal under control and to clean up messes or the privilege of bringing their dog to events on school property will be revoked.

When an uncontrolled dog or other animal is discovered on school or district property, the site administrator should call animal control and notify the Supt. of Schools. Children need to be removed from the area until the animal is removed by an appropriate official.

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