

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

The Board recognizes that animals can enhance student learning experiences, but is also concerned with the health and safety of students, staff and visitors and the humane treatment of animals. The presence of live animals in the classroom should be directly related to the objectives of the instructional program.

Permission must be obtained from the building principal before any animal is brought into school.

The following guidelines shall apply to the presence of animals in the Augusta schools:

- A. The presence of an animal in the classroom must be directly related to the instructional program. The length of time the animal is expected to be present will be specified in advance.
- B. Permission must be obtained from the building principal before animals are brought to school by anyone. If students need to bring domesticated animals (pets) to school for educational purposes, they must consult with their teacher(s) who, in turn, will request permission from the building principal.
- C. The principal or classroom teacher will notify parents than an animal will be present so that any health concerns can be addressed in advance.
- D. Animals may not be transported in school vehicles.
- E. No pets will be allowed in school unless proof of current rabies vaccination (if appropriate) is provided.
- F. No wild animals will be allowed in school unless 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., zookeepers, veterinarians, biologists, Maine Fish and Wildlife personnel). Student will not be permitted to handle wild animals.
- G. All animals brought to school must be restrained by the owner/handler. The teacher is responsible for the proper supervision and control of students whenever there is an exhibit or activity involving animals in school.

- H. Animals kept in classrooms must be housed in appropriate containers and cared for in a safe and humane manner. Only the teacher or students designated by the teacher are to handle these animals. If animals are to be kept in the classroom on days when classes are not in session, arrangements must be made for adequate continuing care.
- I. If a student is bitten/injured by an animal on school premises, the building principal, school nurse and parent/guardian must be notified as soon as possible. If a staff member or visitor is bitten/injured, the building principal must be notified. The building principal must notify appropriate public health authorities and the Maine Department of Human Services, Bureau of Health, of each incident. An accident/injury report must also be completed and forwarded to the Superintendent.
- J. If a stray or wild animal appears on school grounds, children shall not be allowed in the area until the animal has left the premises or is removed by the local animal control officer, game warden or other appropriate official.
- K. No animal may be used as part of a scientific experiment or for any other purpose in which the normal health of the animal is interfered with or where pain or distress is caused. No person may practice vivisection or exhibit a vivisected animal in the schools. Dissection of dead animals shall be confined to the classroom and to the presence of students engaged in the study of dissection and shall not be for the purpose of exhibition.
- L. Service animals will be permitted in school and on school buses in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. A service animal is an animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. If a conflict arises between the presence of a service animal and the health conditions of students or staff or if issues arise pertaining to the care or management of the animal, the building principal and/or Superintendent will seek to achieve an appropriate resolution.

Legal Reference: Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.)
7 MRSA § 3971
22 MRSA §§ 801-825

Cross Reference: JLCE—First Aid and Emergency Medical Care

Adopted: August 19, 1998

Revised: _____