

Penn Valley Union Elementary School District

Animals at School - Instructional Purposes Rules and Procedures

The Governing Board recognizes that animals can contribute to the district's instructional program by being effective teaching aids to students and by assisting individuals with disabilities to access district programs and activities. In addition, instruction related to the care and treatment of animals teaches students a sense of responsibility and promotes the humane treatment of living creatures.

District rules and procedures are herein provided to ensure that when animals are brought to school, the health, safety, and welfare of students, staff, and the animals are protected. However, the district assumes no liability for the safety of animals allowed on district property.

All animals brought to school must be (see checklist attached):

1. In good physical condition
2. Vaccinated against transmittable diseases
3. In clean, safe and suitable cages or containers or otherwise appropriately controlled
4. Species of animal appropriate for the instructional purpose and age and maturity of the students.
4. Approved, in writing, by the principal

The principal shall give such permission only after written notification to all parents/guardians of students in the affected class has been provided, asking them to verify whether their child has any known allergies, asthma, or other health condition that may be aggravated by the animal's presence. When a parent/guardian has provided notification that his/her child has an allergy, asthma, or other health condition that may be aggravated by the animal, the principal shall take appropriate measures to protect the student from exposure to the animal.

CLASS PETS

Non-poisonous Fish, birds, insects and reptiles may be class pets with the permission of the principal.

1. The teacher shall ensure that all animals brought to school shall be adequately fed, effectively controlled, humanely treated, and properly housed in cages or containers suitable for the species.
2. The teacher shall ensure that cages and containers are cleaned regularly and that waste materials are removed and disposed of in an appropriate manner. (Under no circumstances will students be allowed to clean cages or handle animal waste products.)
3. The teacher shall ensure that students receive instructions regarding the proper handling of and personal hygiene around animals.

THE FOLLOWING ANIMALS ARE NOT PERMITTED IN SCHOOLS:

- venomous or toxin-producing animals (e.g. certain spiders, certain insects, certain reptiles and amphibians)
- wild or exotic animals
- mammals at high-risk for transmitting rabies (e.g. bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes and coyotes)
- non-human primates
- stray animals
- baby chicks and ducks (unless they are only going to be handled by the owner) (babies are known to carry & transmit certain diseases)
- turtles with a carapace length less than 4"
- aggressive/unpredictable animals
- family pets (Per District's liability insurance)

CONDITIONS REQUIRING THE REMOVAL OF AN ANIMAL FROM SCHOOL PREMISES:

Injury: Any animal that causes injury to staff or students must be immediately isolated and removed from the school premises until the situation is resolved. An injury report must be completed and the appropriate medical care must be administered.

Health Issue: If a student or staff member has an allergic reaction or other health problem because of the presence of an animal, the animal must be immediately removed from the classroom/workspace of the affected individual and removed from school premises until the situation is resolved.

Aggression: Any animal that behaves aggressively must be immediately isolated and removed from the school premises.

Liability

The owner or handler of any animal, including a service animal, is responsible for the animal's behavior and shall be liable for all damages suffered by persons who may be bitten or injured, and all damages to public or private property, regardless of the former viciousness of the animal or the owner's knowledge of such viciousness.

Reference

Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 6163.2: Animals at School

Staff Member will complete attached Staff Request for Animal(s) on School Premises form and attach required documentation. Please allow two weeks prior notification.

PENN VALLEY UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ANIMALS ON SCHOOL APPLICATION & PROCEDURES

The purpose of the Animals on School Premises procedures is to allow animals in the classroom while providing for the health and safety of school staff, students and animals. The procedures identify five (5) categories of animals and the procedures to be followed in order to bring animals on school premises. It specifies conditions under which animals must be removed from school premises.

CATEGORY	PROCEDURES
<p>Animals Used in Educational Presentations (single event)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff member completes Appendix D: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify instructional purpose or social/emotional objective 2. Provide statement of animal health & temperament or verify that the animal is part of a presentation conducted by an experienced animal handler who engages in demonstrations in a school setting on a regular basis 3. Obtain principal's signature of approval to proceed to next steps 4. Notify parents of upcoming presentation (Parent consent required) 5. Provide modifications for students who have animals fears or allergies 6. Obtain principal's final approval
<p>Cold Blooded Animals Not Handled by Children (for one year, renewable)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff member completes Appendix D: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify instructional purpose or social/emotional objective 2. Provide statement of animal health & temperament or verify that the animal is part of a presentation conducted by a certified program or agency 3. Obtain principal's signature of approval to proceed to next steps 4. Notify parents of upcoming presentation (Parent consent required) 5. Provide modifications for students who have animals fears or allergies 6. Obtain principal's final approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff member follows procedures for cleaning and disinfecting sinks, cages and surfaces (Appendix C)
<p>Classroom Animals (for one year, renewable)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff member completes Appendix D: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify instructional purpose or social/emotional objective 2. Provide statement of animal health & temperament or verify that the animal is provided by a certified program or agency 3. Obtain principal's signature of approval to proceed to

	<p>next steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Notify parents of upcoming presentation (Parent consent required) 5. Provide modifications for students who have animals fears or allergies 6. Obtain principal's final approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff member follows procedures for cleaning and disinfecting sinks, cages and surfaces (Appendix C) • Staff member provides instruction for students on proper care and handling of animal (Appendix A)
Animals Excluded from School or Classroom Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poisonous, venomous animals • Family pets unless all policy requirements are met (and \$50,000 deductible waiver granted by Schools Insurance Group)
Animals Exempt from Compliance With Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained & certified service animals supporting individuals with disabilities • Animals used in K-8 Science Curriculum • Invertebrates used in Grades 9-12 Science Curriculum (Vantage Point Charter)

CONDITIONS REQUIRING THE REMOVAL OF AN ANIMAL FROM SCHOOL PREMISES:

Injury: Any animal that causes injury to staff or students must be immediately isolated and removed from the school premises until the situation is resolved. An injury report must be completed and the appropriate medical care must be administered.

Health Issue: If a student or staff member has an allergic reaction or other health problem because of the presence of an animal, the animal must be immediately removed from the classroom/workspace of the affected individual and removed from school premises until the situation is resolved.

Aggression: Any animal that behaves aggressively must be immediately isolated and removed from the school premises.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES:

Animals may not be transported to and/or from school on school buses or via any other transportation provided by the school district.

Training animals while in pay status during their work hours as an employee of the district is prohibited.

Appendices A-D are used when school staff request approval to bring an animal on the premises of any PVEDS/RSUESD school.

- Appendix A: Best Practices for Introducing a Classroom Animal
- Appendix B: Responsible Use of Live Animals and Dissection in the Science Classroom
- Appendix C: Guidelines for Cleaning and Disinfecting Sinks and Other Hard Surfaces after contact with a reptile
- Appendix D: Staff Request for Animal(s) on School Premises
- Appendix E: Parent/Guardian information and Consent Form

Staff Request for Animal(s) on School Premises

The purpose of this checklist is to assist staff and the principal in following the procedures outlined. Animals may be permitted on school premises when there is an instructional purpose based on Penn Valley Union School District academic standards and when the presence of the animal will directly support the learning strategies and achievement objectives of the standards. Animals may also be permitted on school premises to support social emotional growth for students.

Requestor: _____

Date: _____

Animal Type: _____

Number of Animals: _____

<p>1. Support for Standards/Social Emotional Objectives:</p> <p>The presence of the animal will support the academic standards and/or the social emotional growth of students. It will directly support the learning strategies and achievement objectives of the classroom.</p>	<p>List Standards or specific social/emotional objectives:</p>
<p>2. Statement of animal health and temperament Provide to Principal prior to animal's arrival at school and prior to distribution of parent notification letter.</p>	<p>_____ Signed statement of health and temperament attached; or _____ Animal provided by certified program or agency</p>
<p>3. Principal Permission Submit a draft parent letter. Obtain principal's permission to proceed.</p>	<p>_____ I have reviewed this plan along with draft letters and give my consent to proceed.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signed _____ Date _____</p>
<p>4. Parent/Guardian Consent Send all parents written communication about the presence of animals in your classroom. Obtain written consent of parents/guardians.</p>	<p>_____ Parent Consent (Signatures) attached</p>
<p>5. Alternate Plans If requested by a parent/guardian, develop alternate plans and/or modifications for the animal.</p>	<p>_____ Alternate plan and/or modifications attached.</p>
<p>6. Agreement:</p> <p>I have reviewed the Animals in the School Procedures and will implement them accordingly.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Requestor Signature _____ Date _____</p>	<p>_____ I have reviewed this request and the attached documents. I give my consent to the presence of the animal(s) described.</p> <p>_____ I do not approve of this plan. Reasons:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Principal Signature _____ Date _____</p> <p>Principal consent is valid for up to one year; the request may be reviewed and renewed if appropriate.</p>

Penn Valley Union Elementary School District

**ANIMALS ON SCHOOL PREMISES
Parent/Guardian Information and Consent**

**Appendix
E - Sample**

Date: _____

From: _____
(Name and Title)

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Animals are permitted on school premises when there is an instructional purpose based on District academic standards and when the presence of the animal will directly support learning or social-emotional objectives. Animals are used to help students learn about nature and the environment. They may also be used in classrooms to increase students' interest in learning. A positive bond between an animal and a child can support social and emotional growth.

As your child's teacher, I am planning to bring an animal into our classroom as described below. My principal has given tentative approval for this plan.

Number and type of animals:

Instructional purposes and activities:

Animal location and enclosure while at school:

Length of time animal will be at school (date(s)/time(s)):

Some children have health problems when they are near animals. Children with allergies may get a runny nose, a scratchy throat, or have itchy eyes, ears, or skin. Children with asthma may wheeze, cough, or have chest tightness. Some children may develop allergies from being in a classroom every day with an animal. If other people in your family have allergies, the risk for your child may be greater. Some children who have a predisposition to allergies may develop symptoms after being in a classroom every day with an animal.

Please report any observable symptoms or concerns your child may exhibit because of the animal to me or the Principal so that an alternative plan for the animal can be developed. Please also indicate your consent for your child to participate in classroom activities with animals using the form below. Return your response to me by _____.

- I give my permission for my child to be in the classroom during activities with animals as described above.
- I have concerns about my child's health and/or safety or for other reasons I do not give my consent. I can be reached at: _____.

Child's Name

Parent/Guardian Name - please print legibly

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Additional Comments:

Best Practice for Introducing a Classroom Animal

1. The teacher should become acquainted and comfortable with the needs, characteristics and temperament of the animal(s) before introducing it to the students. The teacher should share this information with the students.
 2. The animal should be provided with an enclosure of adequate size to permit exercise and with some shelter for privacy.
 3. Students should be taught that the animal needs its own space, just as they do, and that their hands must stay out of the cage. If the animal is to be handled, it should be outside its cage, either in another container or in a designated area.
 4. Introducing an animal to a classroom is an opportunity to teach responsibility and empathy.
 5. Before an animal is made available for handling, students should quietly observe the animal's behavior. Gradually introduce handling of the animal.
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NSTA Position Statement

Responsible Use of Live Animals and Dissection in the Science Classroom

Introduction

NSTA supports the decision of science teachers and their school or school district to integrate live animals and dissection in the K-12 classroom. Student interaction with organisms is one of the most effective methods of achieving many of the goals outlined in the National Science Education Standards (NSES). To this end, NSTA encourages educators and school officials to make informed decisions about the integration of animals in the science curriculum. NSTA opposes regulations or legislation that would eliminate an educator's decision-making role regarding dissection or would deny students the opportunity to learn through actual animal dissection.

NSTA encourages districts to ensure that animals are properly cared for and treated humanely, responsibly, and ethically. Ultimately, decisions to incorporate organisms in the classroom should balance the ethical and responsible care of animals with their educational value.

While this position statement is primarily focused on vertebrate animals, NSTA recognizes the importance of following similar ethical practices for all living organisms.

Including Live Animals in the Classroom

NSTA supports including live animals as part of instruction in the K-12 science classroom because observing and working with animals firsthand can spark students' interest in science as well as a general respect for life while reinforcing key concepts as outlined in the NSES.

NSTA recommends that teachers

- Educate themselves about the safe and responsible use of animals in the classroom. Teachers should seek information from reputable sources and familiarize themselves with laws and regulations in their state.
 - Become knowledgeable about the acquisition and care of animals appropriate to the species under study so that both students and the animals stay safe and healthy during all activities.
 - Follow local, state, and national laws, policies, and regulations when live organisms, particularly native species, are included in the classroom.
 - Integrate live animals into the science program based on sound curriculum and pedagogical decisions.
 - Develop activities that promote observation and comparison skills that instill in students an appreciation for the value of life and the importance of caring for animals responsibly.
 - Instruct students on safety precautions for handling live organisms and establish a plan for
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addressing such issues as allergies and fear of animals.

- Develop and implement a plan for future care or disposition of animals at the conclusion of the study as well as during school breaks and summer vacations.
- Espouse the importance of not conducting experimental procedures on animals if such procedures are likely to cause pain, induce nutritional deficiencies, or expose animals to parasites, hazardous/toxic chemicals, or radiation.
- Shelter animals when the classroom is being cleaned with chemical cleaners, sprayed with pesticides, and during other times when potentially harmful chemicals are being used.
- Refrain from releasing animals into a non-indigenous environment.

Dissection

NSTA supports each teacher's decision to use animal dissection activities that help students

1. develop skills of observation and comparison,
2. discover the shared and unique structures and processes of specific organisms, and
3. develop a greater appreciation for the complexity of life.

It is essential that teachers establish specific and clear learning goals that enable them to appropriately plan and supervise the activities. Teachers, especially those at the primary level, should be especially cognizant of students' ages and maturity levels when deciding whether to use animal dissection.

NSTA encourages teachers to be sensitive to students' views regarding dissection, and to be aware of students' beliefs and their right to make an informed decision about their participation. Should a teacher feel that an alternative to dissection would be a better option for a student or group of students, it is important that the teacher select a meaningful alternative.

Finally, NSTA calls for more research to determine the effectiveness of animal dissection activities and alternatives and the extent to which these activities should be integrated into the science curriculum.

Regarding the use of dissection activities in school classrooms, NSTA recommends that science teachers

- Conduct laboratory and dissection activities with consideration and appreciation for the organism.
 - Plan laboratory and dissection activities that are appropriate to the maturity level of the students.
 - Use prepared specimens purchased from a reputable and reliable scientific supply company. An acceptable alternative source for fresh specimens (i.e., squid, chicken wings) would be an FDA-inspected facility such as a butcher shop, fish market, or supermarket. The use of salvaged specimens does not reflect safe practice.
 - Conduct laboratory and dissection activities in a clean and organized work space with care and laboratory precision.
 - Conduct dissections in an appropriate physical environment with the proper ventilation, lighting, furniture, and equipment, including hot water and soap for cleanup.
 - Use personal safety protective equipment, such as gloves, chemical splash goggles, and aprons, all of which should be available and used by students, teachers, and visitors to the classroom.
 - Address such issues as allergies and squeamishness about dealing with animal specimens.
 - Ensure that the specimens are handled and disposed of properly.
 - Ensure that sharp instruments, such as scissors, scalpels, and other tools, are used safely and appropriately.
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- Base laboratory and dissection activities on carefully planned curriculum objectives.
- Be prepared to present an alternative to dissection to students whose views or beliefs make this activity uncomfortable and difficult for them.

- Adopted by the NSTA Board of Directors
June 2005

References

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Additional Resources

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This document can be found online at
www.nsta.org/positionstatement&psid=44

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Appendix C

Guidelines for Cleaning and Disinfecting Sinks and Other Hard Surfaces After Contact With a Reptile

Cleaning and disinfecting sinks, tables and counter tops can be done following either of the methods outlined below. The Contact/Rinse method can be completed more quickly because it only requires 30 seconds of contact between the bleach solution and the item being cleaned. In this method, the residual bleach is rinsed off after the 30 second contact time. The Air Dry Method uses a weaker bleach concentration but requires a longer contact time.

	Air Dry Method	Contact/Rinse Method
Clean cage	Wash the cage, tank, counter top, table, or sink with hot, soapy water	
Mix bleach	Mix bleach with cold water. Mix just before using (no more than 24 hrs before)	
Bleach concentration	25 parts per million (ppm) 1/8 tsp per 16 oz (pint) 1/4 tsp per 32 oz (qt) 1 tsp per 128 oz (gallon)	50-100 ppm 1 tsp per 16 oz (pint) 1 tablespoon per 32 oz (qt) 1/4 cup per 128 oz (gallon)
Apply bleach solution	Spray cage, tank, counter top, table, or sink with bleach solution	
	Let bleach solution air dry for at least 10-15 minutes	Allow 30 seconds contact with bleach solution
		Rinse residual bleach solution with cold water

Guidelines for Cleaning Cages, Aquariums, and Terrariums

All animal cages should be cleaned with a solution of 50% vinegar and water or other professionally prepared commercial products designed for that purpose.