

Regulation Code: 4202/5029/7272-R Animals in Schools

I. General Guidelines for Animals in Schools

A. ANIMALS IN CURRICULUM

1. Baby Chicks and Ducks

These may be used with the kindergarten science curriculum; handling of supplies and materials for hatching chicks will be limited to teachers and all chicks will be released to a local farm upon completion of the unit; teachers and students will observe the district laboratory safety plan. It is unlawful to sell baby chicks and ducks as pets in North Carolina due to the high risk of salmonellosis and campylobacteriosis to handlers.

2. Middle and high school science teachers, and elementary science specialists, may use a variety of living organisms/animals to engage students in the exploration of science and to meet the Essential Standards curriculum goals and objectives of a particular course. The teachers will:

- ensure that animals/organisms are properly handled and maintained,
- house and retain the animals/organisms within their classrooms,
- promote hand washing after handling of any animal/organism, and,
- adhere to the intent of this policy to ensure the health and safety of all students.

3. Any other classroom teacher who wishes to maintain animals for the express purpose of achieving Essential Standards curriculum goals must first consult with the district Science Coordinator. The Science Coordinator will consult with appropriate district staff and return a decision based upon health and safety considerations of all students to the school administrator and the teacher.

4. School programs that house animals other than for the express purpose of achieving grade level Essential Standards curriculum goals must:

- a. be reviewed and approved annually by the district Safety Officer,
- b. have adult handlers who are certified in the care and handling of animals, and
- c. develop and post clear procedures for handling animals and cleaning the habitat in accordance with guidelines set forth in this document.

The district Safety Officer will terminate any program that does not observe district guidelines or if the conditions for approval change.

B. VISITING ANIMALS

1. During school hours or school events when students are present on campus or in school buildings, dogs may only be brought onto school campuses for instructional purposes, and with permission of a school administrator.

2. Dogs accompanying parents/guardians while walking children to school must be kept on leash on the school perimeter away from the school entrance and away from other children and adults. Dog owners must responsibly dispose of fecal waste and respectfully keep his or her dog away from others. Dogs may not be brought into the school building.

3. Puppies and kittens may be brought to school without the parent animal for short visits, with permission of the school principal. Limited handling of puppies and kittens will be determined by the owner. Students will wash hands after handling of any animal.

4. Other visiting animals, such as hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, rabbits, or other, must be

approved by the principal and may be handled by the owner or keeper only.

5. Visiting animals are restricted to an area designated by the principal or administrator.

6. Teachers must determine if any children or adults are allergic to visiting animals prior to allowing the animal to enter the classroom, and take care to protect the student's health.

C. SPECIAL CONDITIONS FOR SPECIFIC ANIMALS

Specific recommendations should be observed because of animals' diseases and/or behavioral tendencies.

1. Dogs

School staff may bring dogs with them into the building on weekend days and evenings when they may be working alone in the building. They may not bring dogs into the building at times when students are present or on teacher workdays. Visiting dogs must wear a proper collar, harness and/or leash while on school grounds so that they can be easily controlled. The owner or person responsible for the animal must remain with it during the school visit. Dogs should not be in estrus (heat) at the time of the visit.

2. Ferrets

Ferrets are restricted to science labs and handled only by persons responsible for them.

3. Fish

Aquariums must be properly maintained by staff at all times, including during breaks from school. Used tank water should be disposed of in sinks that are not used for food preparation or for obtaining water for human consumption. Disposable gloves should be worn when cleaning aquariums, and staff must wash hands after the cleaning.

4. Reptiles and Amphibians

Non-poisonous snakes, turtles, salamanders, frogs, and others must be maintained in a case that provides a physical barrier between animals and students. Special care must be taken with green iguanas and slider turtles; these may not be handled by students.

5. Psittacine birds

Parrots, parakeets, budgies, and cockatiels may not fly free in any classroom and should not be handled by children because they can carry a zoonotic disease such as psittacosis.

II. Service Animals

A. DEFINITION OF "SERVICE ANIMAL"

A "service animal" for purposes of this policy is any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability.

The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability or necessary to mitigate a disability. Federal regulation [28 C.F.R. 35.104](#) provides examples of types of work or tasks that would qualify. Service animals do not include any other species of animal, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, except that a miniature horse will be permitted for use as a service animal if reasonable modifications can be made after assessing the specific factors listed in [28 C.F.R. 35.136\(i\)](#). Animals whose sole function is to provide emotional support, well-being, comfort, companionship, or therapeutic benefits, or to act as a crime deterrent, are not service animals for the purposes of this policy.

B. USE OF A SERVICE ANIMAL ON SCHOOL PROPERTY BY STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

1. Introduction of a Service Animal

School administrators shall facilitate the introduction of an eligible service animal into the school environment. To promote a successful integration of the service animal into the educational program and to minimize unnecessary disruption, an employee or student with a disability who intends to bring a service animal to school during the school day is encouraged to follow these guidelines.

- a. The employee, student, or student's parent should notify the superintendent and the principal of the applicable school in writing at least 10 work days prior to the date proposed to bring the service animal onto school property.
- b. The employee, student, or student's parent should work with school personnel to create a plan addressing the presence of the service animal during the school day. A plan to integrate a service animal into the school environment should include the following:
 - appropriate training for school personnel and students regarding interaction with the service animal;
 - arrangements for meeting the service animal's basic needs during the school day;
 - any necessary modifications to the educational program so that the employee or student with a disability may be accompanied by the service animal; and
 - when necessary, provisions for the presence of a handler other than the employee or student with the disability to control or care for the service animal.
- c. It is recommended, but not required, that the service animal wear identification to provide adequate notice to students, school personnel, and school visitors that the dog is a service animal.
- d. No specific training is required for a dog to qualify as a service animal. The school cannot require proof that the animal has been certified, trained or licensed as a service animal. Only two inquiries are permitted: (1) whether the animal is required because of the individual's disability and (2) what tasks or work the service animal has been trained to do.
- e. There are no weight or size limitations for service dogs.
- f. No particular breed of dog can automatically be excluded solely based on the perceived characteristics of the breed.
- g. The service animal should be free of parasites and otherwise in good health.

2. Presence of a Service Animal on School Property

An employee or student with a disability accompanied by a service animal must meet the following requirements for a service animal to be present on school property.

- a. A student or employee who elects to be accompanied by a service animal will be expected to care for and supervise the animal. If a student is not capable of providing adequate care and supervision, the parent will be responsible for providing such care and supervision. The school is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal.
- b. If a student requires assistance from a parent or handler to control and care for the service animal while on school property, that individual must submit to a background screening, which may include a criminal history check in accordance with state law and any procedures established by the superintendent.
- c. The service animal must be on a leash or other mechanical restraint at all times. If mechanical restraint is not feasible due to a student's disability, the animal must be under

other sufficient means of control.

d. The service animal must be housebroken, under the control of its handler, and have received all necessary vaccinations as required by state law.

e. The service animal must be permitted in all areas where the student, employees or visitors, as relevant, are allowed to go.

f. The school may not require payment of a surcharge or other fee for the service animal.

g. Miniature horses

i. In some cases, a school may be required to accommodate a miniature horse that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability.

ii. The school may consider the following:

- The type, size and weight of the miniature horse and whether the facility can accommodate these features;
- Whether the handler has sufficient control of the horse;
- Whether the horse is housebroken; or
- Whether the horse's presence in the facility compromises legitimate safety requirements

h. Therapy and Law Enforcement animals

With prior approval by the school administrator, therapy dogs and law enforcement animals may be used on school grounds and in classroom situations.

The principal or designee shall notify all security personnel of the existence and possible locations of any service animals on school property.

C. USE OF A SERVICE ANIMAL ON SCHOOL PROPERTY BY SCHOOL VISITORS

A school visitor who is an individual with a disability may be accompanied by a service animal in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations and with policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools. A service animal that is accompanying a school visitor may be properly excluded from school property for a reason(s) set forth in section E of this policy.

D. LIABILITY

The board may hold the owner or handler of a service animal liable for any property damage caused by the animal to the same extent required by other board policy or administrative rules that impose liability for property damage. In addition, either the owner or handler, or both, may be liable for personal injury caused by the animal or related to the presence of the animal on school property.

E. EXCLUSION OF A SERVICE ANIMAL FROM SCHOOL PROPERTY

School personnel shall not ask an individual with a disability about the nature or extent of his or her disability or for proof of a service animal's training as a condition of allowing the animal onto school property. However, when not readily apparent to school personnel, a principal or designee may inquire as to whether the animal is required because of a disability and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform. Such inquiries may be made to confirm that the dog is a service animal and is rightfully present on school property.

A principal or designee may exclude a service animal from school property for the following reasons:

1. The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by

reasonable modifications.

2. The animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it.
3. The animal is not housebroken.
4. The presence or behavior of the animal fundamentally alters the service, program, or activity of the school system.

If a principal or designee excludes a dog or service animal from school property, the principal or designee must document the reasons for the exclusion and notify the superintendent. The superintendent or designee will make a determination on whether a service animal will be allowed to return to the school and, if reasonably possible, notify the individual with the disability in writing of the decision within five work days of the initial exclusion.

If the superintendent determines that an animal does not meet the definition of a service animal or that a service animal should be excluded for one or more of the reasons described in this section, the student's Section 504 or IEP Team shall meet to consider and document whether the animal's presence is necessary for the child to receive an appropriate education or to have equal access to the educational program and, if not, whether the child needs other aids and services or accommodations.

If a service animal is excluded, an individual with a disability will be provided the opportunity to participate in educational services, programs or activities as required by law without having the service animal on the premises.

F. APPEAL OF AN EXCLUSION OF A SERVICE ANIMAL FROM SCHOOL PROPERTY

The superintendent's decision regarding exclusion of a service animal from school property in accordance with this policy may be appealed consistent with policy 1720/4015/7225, Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Complaint Procedure, and any other procedure established by the superintendent under policy 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities.

Service Animals

II. Animals UNACCEPTABLE for Schools

Exceptions to this recommendation include instances when such animals are presented at schools by professionals who have experience handling them.

A. VENOMOUS ANIMALS

No poisonous snakes, wasps, yellow jackets, black widow or brown recluse spiders may be kept in classrooms.

B. WILD MAMMALS

Wild mammals or hybrid offspring may not be brought to school or handled by students.

C. STRAY ANIMALS

Stray animals should never be brought onto school campuses because the health and vaccination status of these animals is seldom known.

D. AGGRESSIVE ANIMALS

Animals bred or trained to demonstrate aggression toward humans and/or animals, currently or in the past, are not permitted on school campuses.

III. Field Trips Involving Animals

Field trips are an important teaching tool but can pose unique health risks because of the possibility of physical trauma and/or exposure to infectious diseases.

Teachers and field trip chaperones must observe the same animal guidelines as for the school setting: students may observe animals but may not handle them. Any incidental contact with animals that may occur during a field trip requires washing hands well with soap and running water, or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean hands until there is access to soap and running water.

Food and drink that is consumed during a field trip must occur in an area that is well apart from where people and animals interact. Always wash hands before eating. Do not consume or allow students to consume raw (unpasteurized) dairy products.

When on a field trip involving animals, teachers, students, and chaperone must be reminded that:

1. Increased activity and sudden movements can make animals feel threatened,
2. Animal bites can usually be avoided if students are kept in small groups,
3. Rough play or teasing is frightening to animals and is not allowed,
4. Children should not try to "kiss" animals or have them in close contact with their faces at any time, especially for reptiles and amphibians, and
5. Education on care of animals should reemphasize proper hygiene and hand washing.

Immunocompromised students may be especially susceptible to zoonotic diseases; therefore, special precautions may be needed to minimize the risk of disease transmission to these students.

Consultation with the child's parents or the school nurse about precautionary measures is strongly advised.

IV. Handling and Disposal of Animal Wastes While on School Campuses

A. CLEAN UP OF ANIMAL WASTES

Children should not be allowed to handle or clean up any form of animal waste (feces, urine, blood, etc.). Animal wastes should be disposed of where children can not come in contact with them, such as in a plastic bag or container with a lid or via the sewage system for feces. Food handlers should not be involved in the cleanup of animal waste.

B. PROHIBITED AREAS

Animal wastes should not be disposed of, and visiting animals should not be allowed to defecate, in or near areas where children routinely play or congregate (i.e., sandboxes, school playgrounds, etc.).

C. LITTER BOXES

Litter boxes for visiting animals should not be allowed in classrooms. Information should be provided to pregnant students or teachers about the risk of toxoplasmosis to an unborn child.

D. CEDAR SHAVINGS SHOULD NOT BE USED AS BEDDING FOR ANIMALS.

E. Handwashing with soap, mechanical friction, and running water should be encouraged after every animal contact.

V. Wound Management

If a child or adult is bitten or scratched by an animal, wound treatment is important regardless of the apparent severity. Universal precautions should be used by the person attending to the wound. Bleeding should be stopped as quickly as possible. Where appropriate, the wound should be washed with soap and water, dried, and dressing applied. Because of the possibility of infection, medical personnel should be consulted to determine if further treatment is necessary.

Even very tame animals may react aggressively in strange situations; therefore, student contact with animals should always be supervised and regulated by a few basic rules.

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Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools
