



**POLICY TITLE:**  
**Animals In School**

**Board Approval: October 24, 2018**  
**Board Review: October 18, 2023**

**OBJECTIVE:**

The inclusion of animals in schools can be beneficial to the curriculum and school community. This policy will provide guidelines and requirements for the inclusion of animals in schools for instructional purposes and short visits, as well as direction on responsibilities of the care of animals in schools.

**PRINCIPLES:**

The following principles apply:

1. Providing for the inclusion of animals in schools is recognized as an opportunity for significant, motivational experiences that enhance learning.
2. The inclusion must take into consideration the health and safety of students, staff and animals.

**POLICY:**

**1. Animals in School**

- 1.1. With the approval of the Principal, teachers may bring animals into schools for instructional purposes for a one day visit or extended periods of time.
- 1.2. Instructional purposes for the presence of animals in schools may include:
  - 1.2.1. as subjects for observation and data gathering on body characteristics, habits, movement, feeding behaviour, instinctive reactions;
  - 1.2.2. talking and writing stories about animals to support language development;
  - 1.2.3. supporting the development and learning of a sense of responsibility, kindness and concern for other living beings; and
  - 1.2.4. supporting the development and learning of a healthy respect for the animals in our local environment.

**2. Conditions for Animals in School**

- 2.1. Prior to introducing an animal into a classroom, the teacher must ensure that the following conditions have been met:
  - 2.1.1. students and school personnel must not be afraid of or allergic to that type of animal;

- 2.1.2. animals must be in good health, free of disease with no tendencies to bite or scratch;
- 2.1.3. the owner of the cat/dog must show proof of current vaccinations and licensing;
- 2.1.4. the teacher bringing the animal into the school must know the past history of the animal; and
- 2.1.5. the animal must not present aggressive behaviour towards the students or to school personnel; and parents must be informed.
- 2.2. An animal brought into the school for a visit must be leashed and under the control of a responsible adult. Where a leash cannot be used, the animal must be under the control of a responsible adult.
- 2.3. Animals are not permitted to roam freely in the school building or on the school grounds.

### **3. Withdrawal of Approval for Animals in School**

- 3.1. If, in the opinion of the Principal, animal hygiene becomes a factor, approval to keep the animal in the school is withdrawn and the animal must be taken from the school at the end of the school day.
- 3.2. If conditions change (animal, student, or environment) withdrawal of the animal can be made at the discretion of the Principal.

### **4. Types of Animals Permitted in School**

- 4.1. Only relatively small animals which are easily confined or caged maintained and handled may be kept in the classroom, such as tropical fish and small mammals.
- 4.2. Larger animals such as dogs and cats may not be kept in the school building beyond regular school hours.
- 4.3. Accredited service dogs are permitted to accompany a student during regular school hours and activities providing they have met the requirements outlined in provincial or federal regulation governing service dogs.

### **5. Animals Not Permitted in School**

- 5.1. The following are not permitted in schools either as visitors or as classroom animals:
  - 5.1.1. unescorted animals;
  - 5.1.2. poisonous animals;
  - 5.1.3. indigenous wild animals; and
  - 5.1.4. rats.

### **6. Animal Care and the Ethical Treatment of Animals**

- 6.1. The teacher must ensure
  - 6.1.1. the ethical and humane treatment of animals is maintained and modelled;
  - 6.1.2. any animal that is kept in the classroom receives adequate care and is not abused or neglected in any way.
  - 6.1.3. The teacher is responsible for determining the care and feeding requirements for animals kept in the classroom;
  - 6.1.4. ensuring appropriate standards of hygiene and sanitation will be met;
  - 6.1.5. ensuring that animal care procedures are posted and reviewed with the students; and
  - 6.1.6. providing or coordinating for a suitable enclosure for the animal, feeding, cleaning and other duties connected to the accommodation of the animal.

- 6.2. The teacher must ensure that any student who assists the teacher with the care of the animals in the classroom:
  - 6.2.1. is properly trained by the teacher; and
  - 6.2.2. is under on-site supervision by the teacher with the teacher present but not necessarily constantly viewing the activity.
- 6.3. The teacher must ensure that there is a plan in place to provide care to animals:
  - 6.3.1. After school hours, including weekends and holidays; and
  - 6.3.2. in a permanent home when classroom study is completed.

## **7. Animal Injury and Death**

- 7.1. The teacher must be prepared to deal with the death of or injury to the animals kept in the classroom or animals brought to the class as visitors.
- 7.2. In the event of the death of an animal kept in the classroom, the animal must be disposed of safely and in a manner that is sensitive to student emotions and in accordance with current legislation.

## **8. For an Animal Bite**

- 8.1 The teacher must:
  - 8.1.1. Isolate the animal that has bitten the person.
  - 8.1.2. The Principal must be informed of the incident.
  - 8.1.3. An Accident/Injury/Illness Report must be completed and submitted.
  - 8.1.4. The Principal must inform Alberta Health Services and Animal Control if a bite, from a canine, feline or ferret, breaks the skin. If the principal contacts Alberta Health Services, the principal must contact the Executive Director.