Sparta Area School District

Article 618 – Animals in Schools and Classrooms

The Sparta Area School District believes that interaction with animals can enhance a child’s education and provide opportunities for social, emotional and academic growth. Animals may be brought into the classroom for educational purposes only, and only under the conditions established by this policy so as to ensure the safety of students and staff and the well being of the animal. All other animal visits are prohibited. Further, before any animal will be allowed on school premises for educational purposes, prior notice must be given to and permission received from the supervising teacher and the building administrator.

Any teacher who brings one or more animals to school or into the classroom, keeps such animal(s) in his/her classroom as a class pet(s), or allows an adult to bring an animal to school or into the classroom shall:

1. Receive prior permission from the building administrator before any animal(s) are brought into the school.
2. Screen students and staff who will regularly come into contact with the animal(s) at school for serious health conditions that would prohibit the teacher from having the animal(s) at school or in the classroom.
3. Notify the building administrator, after obtaining prior permission, as to the date(s) the animal(s) will be brought to school or into the classroom.
4. Notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing when any animal(s) will be brought into the classroom and the duration of time the animal(s) will be kept in the classroom. Any concerns raised by parent(s)/guardian(s) will be referred to the principal for appropriate intervention.
5. Assume primary responsibility for ensuring the health, welfare and safety of all persons who will come into contact with the animal(s) at school.
6. Provide proper care and maintenance of the animal(s) brought to school and instruct students on animal care, feeding, and handling.
7. Provide a cage for any animal(s) that will remain at school overnight. The cage must appropriately house the animal(s) and be constructed to retain all urine and fecal material within the cage. Reptiles should be housed in a covered glass or plastic aquarium.
8. Prohibit students from handling reptiles or birds, or any other animal that is considered dangerous or when a parent prohibits their child from handling the animal.
9. Clean the cage on a regular basis, utilizing universal precautions and blood-borne pathogen procedures for bagging and disposing of urine, fecal and blood contaminated materials.
10. Properly control and/or confine animal(s) and prohibit students from releasing animal(s) so that they are not at-large and unsupervised in the classroom, in the school, or on school premises.
11. Locate the animal(s) away from water fountains, sinks where students and staff wash hands, areas where food is prepared, stored, or served, and areas where first aid materials are stored or first aid is administered.
12. Provide first aid to any student who is bitten by an animal and report the incident immediately to the school office. The building administrator or designee shall report to the
parent(s)/guardian(s) and to the appropriate authorities where necessary, if a student is bitten or otherwise harmed. An incident report will be filed with the central office.

13. Prohibit students from taking any animal(s) home with them.

**Animals-At-School Guidelines:**

1. Types of animals that are known carriers of rabies (such as skunks or bats), or salmonella, or of parasites that could be transmitted to students or staff shall be prohibited from school, unless their presence is part of a school assembly program where additional safety precautions have been established and approved by the building administrator and subsequently met.

2. When domestic pets are permitted on school premises under this policy, they shall be current on vaccinations and be leashed or wear a collar constraint at all times. Large mammals and livestock shall be haltered and, where appropriate, muzzled or caged. The person attending any domestic pet, large mammal, or livestock shall be responsible for cleaning up any fecal, urine, or blood-contaminated material left by the animal he/she is attending.

3. Birds, including parrots and parakeets, shall be prohibited from school, unless they have been certified as psittacosis free. Such certification must be provided to the building administrator before permission will be granted.

4. Dead animal specimens shall be prohibited from school, unless they have been obtained from a business that provides lab animal specimens to schools.

5. Animal skeletons/hides that have been properly preserved may be brought into school.

6. Animal(s) shall not be transported on school buses.

7. Animal(s) trained, or being trained, to assist persons who are physically/visually impaired shall have access to district property and district-provided transportation when being used for that purpose.

This policy is not meant to restrict public use of school facilities while students are not present, such as private dog training classes. This policy is not intended to restrict the use of police dogs.

All other persons who want to bring any animal(s) to school or into the classroom must request, in writing, permission to do so from the building administrator. Any person who receives permission to bring any animal(s) to school or into the classroom shall assume primary liability for safeguarding the health, welfare, and safety of all persons who come into contact with the animal(s) at school.

**Legal Reference:**

Wisconsin Administrative Code – TRANS 300.16
Wisconsin Statute – 174.056.
Wisconsin Statutes 95.195, Section 6-6, 6-7, 6-13

**Cross Reference:**

Approved: December 18, 2007 – effective with the 2008-2009 school year

Revised: