



INDEPENDENT PROCEDURE

Title: **LIVE ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Procedure No.: **9010**

Effective Date: **2000 Jan 01**

Department: Learning Support Services

Reference(s): Student Use of Guide Dogs and Services Animals Policy and Procedure 5018a

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 Live animals can add an important learning dimension to the classroom.
- 1.2 This procedure provides assistance in the selection of suitable animal species, guidelines for appropriate care of animals in the classroom and guidelines which govern the involvement of animals in experimental procedures in secondary schools.
- 1.3 Teachers who have live animals in the classroom are subject to the conditions outlined in this procedure.
- 1.4 This policy is separate from and is not related to the Student Use of Guide Dogs and Services Animals Policy and Procedure.

2.0 General Philosophy

- 2.1 Live animals, when maintained in the classroom, are an effective source of learning and curricular enrichment. Teachers who have live animals in their classrooms must ensure that curriculum expectations have been identified and that proper provision has been made for the safety of students and the well-being of the animals. Teachers should be sensitive to the needs of children who may be allergic to certain animals. Teachers must notify their principal before animals are permitted in the classroom.
- 2.2 Animals can be used as highly motivational avenues to a variety of significant learnings. The following are offered for consideration.
 - 2.2.1 Live animals are excellent subjects for observation and data gathering. Body characteristics, habits, movement, feeding behaviour, instinctive reactions, etc., can be observed and described. Adaptive characteristics can be studied directly.

Administered By: Learning Support Services

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2.2.2 Live animals are interesting subjects to use in language development. Most students eagerly become involved in talking and writing stories about animals that can be seen and/or touched.

2.2.3 A sense of responsibility, kindness and concern for living things is a natural result from keeping live animals in the classroom.

3.0 The Source and Type of Animals Used

Only relatively small animals which are easily confined, maintained and handled should be kept in the classroom. Common examples are tropical fish and small mammals such as gerbils, hamsters, mice and rats. Larger animals such as rabbits, dogs and cats should not be kept in the classroom. For health reasons, turtles and birds are not to be permitted in the classroom.

Only animals known to be in good health and free of disease should be brought into the classroom. It is important that teachers know the history of animal visitors.

The health of an animal is normally assured when the animal is supplied by a reputable pet store or breeder. Well managed house pets are also presumed to be healthy and safe. Teachers need to plan for an appropriate placement of the animals at the conclusion of the classroom experience.

Under no circumstances should wild vertebrate animals or domestic animals of unknown origin be brought into the classroom.

4.0 General Animal Care Procedures

It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to ensure that any animal that is kept in the classroom receives adequate care and is not abused. This means that there shall be sufficient food and water available, that the animal's habitat is kept clean, and that the animal is handled in the proper fashion.

Knowledge of housing and feeding requirements for specific animals is the responsibility of the teacher. Animal care procedures should be posted and reviewed with the students.

5.0 Precautions and Responsibilities

5.1 Bites and Scratches

To guard against bites and scratches, it is wise to use appropriate gloves when handling any animal. However, accidents do occur and the teacher and the school principal must be prepared to deal with bites and scratches that students might receive while handling the animals. Superficial wounds that do not break the skin are not normally a problem as long as the animal involved is healthy. Significant wounds should be checked by a doctor. In all cases, the animal involved should be kept for several days after an incident in case medical or veterinary officials wish to observe or test the animal.

5.2 Death of, or Injury to, an Animal

The teacher must be prepared to deal with unexpected death or injury to the animals kept in the classroom. In the event of an animal's death, the animal should be disposed of safely and in a way that is sensitive to student emotions.

5.3 Care of Animals Over Holidays and School Breaks

Before an animal is permitted in the classroom, the teacher shall ensure that a plan is in place to provide care on weekends, extended weekends and holiday periods for the animal. When the time for classroom study is ended, a permanent home for the animal must be ensured.

5.4 Animal Experimentation (Secondary School Programs)

5.4.1 Where possible, animal experimentation should be performed on lower order animals (invertebrates).

5.4.2 All experiments shall be performed under the supervision of a competent science teacher. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the students involved have the necessary skills and understanding to carry out the experiment safely and humanely.

5.4.3 Experimental procedures shall not involve the use of any agent that will cause the animal undue stress.

5.4.4 All experiments involving live vertebrate animals shall be conducted in accordance with the following guidelines:

- No experimental procedures shall be attempted on live vertebrate animal which will cause the animal pain or distinct discomfort or will interfere with the animal's health.
- Students shall not perform surgery on vertebrate animals.
- Experimental treatments including electrical shock, exercise until exhaustion, or other distressing stimuli shall not be conducted.
- Behavioural studies involving training shall use only reward (positive reinforcement) and not punishment.