

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide information that will promote safety for instructors and students when animals are brought into the classroom. Many times, inadequate understanding of animal disease and behavior can lead to unnecessary risks for children, teachers, and animals alike. These guidelines are designed to promote a better understanding of:

1. Which animals are not safe to bring into classroom situations.
2. Safety precautions from animals that have the potential to transmit disease to children.
3. Safety precautions for introducing animals into classroom situations.
4. How to properly handle animal wastes to limit the spread of disease from animals to children.

ANIMALS THAT ARE UNACCEPTABLE FOR SCHOOL VISITS:

Wild Animals: For purposes of these guidelines, a wild animal is any mammal that is NOT one of the following: domestic dog, domestic cat, domestic ferret, domestic ungulate (e.g. cow, sheep, goat, pig, horse), pet rabbit, pet rodent (e.g. mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, chinchillas). Exceptions to this are animals in professional presentations.

Poisonous Animals: Spiders, venomous insects, poisonous reptiles (including snakes), and poisonous amphibians. Exceptions to this are animals in professional presentations.

Wolfs - Hybrids: These animals are crosses between a wolf and a dog and have shown to be **aggressive**.

Stray Animals: Due to the fact that the health and vaccinations status of the animals are unknown.

Baby Chicks and Ducks: Because of the high risk of salmonellosis and campylobacteriosis that has been well documented in medical Literature. Exception: Baby chicks and ducks that are hatched in an incubator. The animals should be kept and displayed in cases that provide a physical barrier between the animal and the children (e.g., sturdy glass or plastic) and they are the direct responsibility of the classroom teacher and are not to be handled by children.

Reptiles: Lizards, snakes, turtles, and iguanas - due to the high risk of salmonellosis. Animals of this type that are part of the classroom are to be kept under glass. They are the direct responsibility of the classroom teacher and are not to be handled by children under 12 years of age.

Aggressive Animals: Animals which are bred or trained to demonstrate aggression towards humans or other animals, or animals which have demonstrated such aggressive behaviors in the past, should not be permitted on school campuses. Aggressive, unprovoked, or threatening behaviors should mandate the animal's immediate removal.

Psittacine Birds: (parrots, parakeets, cockatiels). These birds can carry zoonotic diseases such as psittacosis. Birds showing any signs of illness should not be brought into school. Psittacine birds may be brought to school as long as their cages are clean and the birds' wastes can be contained, such as within a cage. Psittacine birds permanently housed on school property in cages should be treated **prophylactically with appropriate tetracycline for psittacosis for 45 days prior to entering the premises.**

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ANIMALS THAT ARE PERMITTED TO VISIT SCHOOLS:

It is important that animals brought into schools be clean and healthy so that the risk of their transmitting diseases to students is minimal. Animals brought to school should be clean and free of external parasites such as fleas, ticks, and mites. Visiting animals should be restricted to an area designated by the teacher. Kittens and puppies may only be appropriate for short classroom visits.

Verified Rabies Vaccination: A current rabies vaccination is required for all dogs, cats and ferrets being brought to the school. Dogs and cats under three months of age and not vaccinated against rabies should NOT be handled by children.

Proper Restraints of Animals: Because animals may react strangely to classroom situations, it is important to have an effective way to control them.

Collars and Leashes: All dogs, cats, and ferrets should be wearing a proper collar, harness, and/or leash when on school grounds. The owner or person responsible for the animal should be able to restrain the animal at all times during the visit. No animal should be allowed to roam unrestrained in the school.

Pet Birds: Pet birds should not be allowed to fly free in a classroom unless it is a part of their **socialization and exercise routine**.

Estrus: Dogs and cats should be determined not to be in estrus (heat) at the time of the visit.

SUGGESTED ANIMALS FOR USE IN SCHOOLS:

The following is a list of animals that are appropriate pets to be housed in schools:

1. Small pet rodents (e.g., mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, chinchillas)
2. Pet rabbits
3. Aquarium fish (salt or fresh water)
4. Non-psittacine cage and aviary birds (e.g., canaries, finches, mynahs, diamond doves)

Animals housed in schools should be provided an appropriate environment (e.g., secure housing, suitable temperature, adequate exercise) and a proper diet. In addition, there should be a plan for the continued care of these animals during the days that school is not in session. Consultation with a veterinarian is advised to help with environmental and nutritional needs and provide care in the event of illness or injury to the animal.

STUDENT CONTACT WITH ANIMALS

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

1. Because increased activity and sudden movements can make animals feel threatened, ALL student contact with animals should be organized and properly administered.
 - a. Animal bites can usually be avoided if students are kept in small groups. If an accidental bite does happen, the County Health Department should be contacted.
 - b. Rough play or teasing should not be allowed in the vicinity of the animal.
2. Students should not feed pets directly from their hands.
3. Small animals such as rabbits, hamsters, gerbils, and mice should be handled with leather gloves whenever possible.
4. Students should avoid "kissing" animals or having close contact with their faces. This statement is especially true for reptiles and amphibians.
5. Students should wash their hands immediately after handling animals.
6. Animals should not be placed in sinks or in any area where food is prepared, stored, or served.

7. Dogs or cats should be kept away from sandboxes where children play.
8. Immunocompromised students and/or students with severe allergies may be especially susceptible to diseases and reactions. Therefore, the student may need to take special precautions to minimize the risk. Alternative classroom experiences may be substituted.
9. Fish - use disposable gloves when cleaning aquariums. Used tank water should be disposed of in sinks that are not used for food preparation or for obtaining water for human consumption.
10. Field Trips - While on field trips, children must use disposable wipes/hand sanitizer after handling/petting animals. Children should use soap and running water as soon as it is available.

HANDLING AND DISPOSAL OF ANIMAL WASTE

Children should not be allowed to handle or clean up animal waste without proper cleaning supplies and training. Animal waste should be disposed of where children cannot come in contact with it, such as in a plastic bag or container with a lid or via the sewage system. Food handlers should not be involved in the cleanup of animal waste.

HUMANE TREATMENT OF THE ANIMALS

There should be no intentional or unintentional abuse, mistreatment or neglect of animals.

CARE AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM

A teacher should have a clear understanding of and a strong commitment to the responsible care of living animals before making any decision to use live animals for educational enrichment. Preparation **for the use of live animals should include knowledge of care appropriate to the species being used** housing, food, exercise, and the appropriate placement of the animals at the conclusion of the study. No animal should be allowed less than the optimum maintenance level of nutrition. Clean drinking water should always be available. Adequate provision for care should be made at all times including vacation times. The addition of animals to the classroom environment can be a positive and rewarding experience for all involved when the necessary steps are taken to avoid possible problems.

Referenced Acts, Statutes, Instructions:

Cross Reference: Animals in Kansas Schools Policy

Adopted _____

Revised: _____

PET VISITING FORM

Your child has indicated that you are able to bring your family pet to share with our class. We look forward to it. We will be expecting you at the following date and time:

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

* * * * *

Please complete the following form and return it to school tomorrow.

Student's Name: _____

Type of Pet: _____

Please check all that apply:

- Pet will be on a leash or in a cage or kennel
- Pet is up-to-date on all vaccinations.

Date of most recent rabies vaccine: _____

- An adult will bring the pet to school and take responsibility for the actions of the pet.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____