

## Administrative Procedures

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| <b>AP-442</b><br><br><b>ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS</b> | <b>Date of implementation:</b> Fall 2026<br><b>Date of Review:</b>                          |
|                                                | <b>Related Administrative Procedures:</b><br><a href="#">AP-424 Service Dogs in Schools</a> |

**Purpose:** The division recognizes that animals may, on occasion, enhance learning experiences for students. This procedure establishes expectations for the presence of animals in schools and school facilities while ensuring the health, safety, inclusion, and well-being of students, staff, visitors, and animals.

### Definitions:

**Animal** - Any non-human living animal brought onto division property or participating in a school activity.

**Classroom Animal** - An animal that is temporarily or regularly housed in a classroom for educational purposes.

**Visiting Animal** - An animal brought to a school for a short-term educational activity, presentation, demonstration, celebration, or special event.

### Procedures:

- 1) Principal Approval
  - a) All animals brought into a school, whether temporary or ongoing, require prior approval from the principal.
  - b) The principal shall consider:
    - i) The educational purpose
    - ii) Health and safety considerations
    - iii) Student and staff allergies
    - iv) Student and staff fears or phobias
    - v) Cultural and religious considerations
    - vi) Animal welfare requirements
    - vii) Supervision requirements
    - viii) Suitability of the school environment
    - ix) Ongoing cost (if applicable)
  - c) Animals shall only be approved where there is a clear educational purpose or learning connection.

- d) Approval may be denied or withdrawn at any time if concerns arise regarding safety, health, supervision and/or animal welfare.

## 2) Classroom Animals

- a) Classroom animals may be approved where they support educational outcomes and can be cared for appropriately.
- b) Are appropriately contained (ie: proper cage, tank, or enclosure)
- c) The staff member responsible for the animal shall:
  - i) Ensure the animal is healthy and properly cared for
  - ii) Provide appropriate housing and containment
  - iii) Ensure access to food and water
  - iv) Supervise all student interactions to prevent harm to either
- d) Handling of animals should be restricted to those individuals knowledgeable in proper handling techniques:
  - i) Arrange care during weekends, holidays, and school closures
  - ii) Teach students safe and respectful handling practices
  - iii) Ensure hand hygiene practices are followed
- e) Animals shall not be kept in classrooms if their presence creates significant health, safety, or environmental concerns.

## 3) Visiting Animals

- a) Animals may be brought into schools on a short-term basis solely to support specific instructional outcomes, presentations, or demonstrations-
- b) The animal must:
  - i) Always be under the control of a responsible adult
  - ii) Be in good health and up to date on required vaccinations
  - iii) Display appropriate temperament and non-aggressive behaviour
  - iv) Be supervised at all times throughout the visit
  - v) Be removed immediately if safety, health or behavioural concerns arise
- c) Where appropriate, parents/caregivers shall be informed in advance of planned visits involving animals.

## 4) Health and Safety Requirements

- a) Prior to approving an animal, the principal shall consider allergies, asthma, medical concerns, and other accommodation needs of students and staff.
- b) Animals shall not be permitted to roam freely within the school unless specifically approved and safely managed.

- c) Students and staff shall wash or sanitize their hands after handling animals, or animal equipment and before eating.
- d) Any injuring, bite, scratch, illness, or other incident involving an animal shall be reported immediately to the principal and addressed in accordance with Division procedures.
- e) Proper disposal of animal waste and cleaning of habitats/cages

5) Animals Not Permitted

- a) The following animals are not permitted in schools:
  - i) Wild animals
  - ii) Venomous species
  - iii) Animals prohibited by law
  - iv) Animals known to carry significant health or safety risks
  - v) High-risk disease carriers (e.g. certain reptiles/amphibians due to Salmonella risks)
  - vi) Animals displaying aggressive or unpredictable behaviour
  - vii) Animals whose care requirements cannot reasonably be met within a school setting

6) Animal Welfare

- a) Animals shall always be treated humanely and respectfully
- b) Students shall not engage in activities that cause stress, injury, or harm to animals
- c) The staff member or responsible adult shall ensure the animal's physical and emotional needs are met while on school property

*References:*

*Animals in Schools – Sample Approval Request Form (internal document)*