

RATIONALE:

Classroom pets and animal visitors to a class/school community can provide valuable learning opportunities as well as opportunities to develop empathy.

Educational purposes for the presence of animals in schools may include:

- a. As subjects for observation and data gathering on body characteristics, habits, movement, feeding behaviour, instinctive reactions, etc.;
- b. Creating stories about animals to support language development;
- c. Supporting the development and learning of a sense of responsibility, kindness and concern for other living beings; and,
- d. Supporting the development and learning of a healthy respect for animals in our local environment.

Staff shall not bring their own household pets into district schools except for educational purposes as approved by the principal.

Definitions:

Classroom Pet: Small animals which are easily confined or caged, such a tropical fish or small mammals.

Classroom Visitor: Larger animals that are in good health and can be leashed and under the control of a responsible adult or housed in a suitable, sanitary enclosure appropriate size and characteristics of the animal.

Accommodation of animals in school district facilities for educational reasons is permissible, subject to the following:

1. Approval from the principal for a specific period.
2. The principal shall ensure, prior to providing approval of a classroom pet and/or classroom visitor, that no students or staff with allergies or who are fearful of the animal will be adversely affected.
3. The teacher is responsible for the provision of suitable cages, feeding, cleaning and other duties connected to the accommodation of such animals.
4. Should, in the opinion of the principal, hygiene become a factor, approval shall be terminated forthwith.
5. All animals shall be removed from the schools prior to the winter, spring, and summer vacation periods.
6. Poisonous reptiles or dangerous animals shall not be accommodated in schools.