

Hawthorn Academy Animals in School Procedure

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to promote the safety of faculty and students when animals are brought into the school and to provide guidance about which animals pose a public health threat in a school setting.

Animals Prohibited From School

Under Utah Administrative Code R392-200, (a) service animals are allowed in schools in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act or with a student's Individualized Education Plan, and (b) animals brought by students or teachers for instruction or demonstration purposes are allowed if controlled in a manner that protects students and, if a vaccine is available for that species, the animal has been vaccinated for rabies. In addition, poisonous, dangerous or otherwise harmful animals shall not be kept on the school premises unless it is in conjunction with a course curriculum, and a warning sign shall be posted on the confining area of animals which are likely to carry disease; the sign shall state the disease causing organisms the animal is likely to be infected with and precautions to people should take to avoid disease. Except as set forth above, no mammals or marsupials may be kept as pets in classrooms in the school.

In determining what animals may be allowed in school for instructional purposes, the following guidelines are established.

Guidelines for Allowing Animals in School for Instructional Purposes

Any animal that is allowed in the school or on school grounds must be clean and healthy so that the risk of their transmitting disease to students and teachers is minimal. Any instruction involving animals should also be used to re-emphasize proper hygiene and hand washing recommendations.

No animals should be allowed in food preparation areas at any time. Food handlers should not be responsible for clean-up of animal wastes, and cages and tanks should not be cleaned in food handling areas.

A student's fear of an animal should be respected. No student with a fear of an animal should be expected or pressured to handle or otherwise interact with an animal.

Animal cages or tanks should be cleaned thoroughly on a regular basis. Students should not be allowed to handle or clean up any form of animal waste (feces, urine, blood, etc.) and wastes should be disposed of in a plastic bag or container with a lid. Anyone who cleans a cage or tank should wash his or her hands immediately after completing the task.

Children with allergies or those with immune deficiencies may be especially susceptible to allergic reactions and diseases transmitted by animals; therefore, special precautions must be taken to minimize risks to those students. Parents should be consulted about precautionary measures prior to exposing such children to animals.

Any fur-bearing animal is susceptible to rabies, which is a very serious and potentially fatal disease. If an animal is infected, the disease can transmit it to students and staff. The risk in a school or other group setting is that a single wild animal or unvaccinated pet carrying rabies has the potential to expose a large number of children.

Wild Animals and Domestic Stray Animals—Wild animals pose a risk for transmitting rabies as well as other zoonotic diseases (disease which can be transmitted from animals to people) and, therefore, should not be allowed in school. Because of the high incidence of rabies in bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes and other wild carnivores, these animals, whether dead or alive, should not be brought to school.

Pet Dogs, Cats, Wolf-Hybrids, Ferrets and Farm Animals— These animals may pose a risk for transmitting rabies, as well as parasites, fleas, other diseases and injuries. Any pets brought to school for instructional purposes should have proof of current rabies vaccination. Animals must be secured and supervised in a manner appropriate to the size and strength of the animal. Only one such animal may be allowed on school grounds at any one time and are not allowed as classroom pets. Animals are not allowed in carpeted areas of the school.

Reptiles and Amphibians—Reptiles (iguanas, snakes, lizards and turtles) and amphibians (frogs, salamanders and toads) can spread salmonella to humans, resulting in diarrhea and fever. This disease can be life threatening in very young children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems. These animals should not be handled by children, pregnant women or individuals with infants at home. Anyone handling a reptile or amphibian should wash his or her hands thoroughly or use hand sanitizer, immediately following contact. These animals may be allowed in the classroom and should remain in their cage except for brief periods when supervised by the teacher. Reptiles and amphibians are not to leave the classroom where their cage is located. The cage is to be cleaned on a regular basis.

Bats—Bats pose a high risk for transmitting rabies. Bats are not allowed on school grounds.

Birds—Psittacosis a serious disease that infected birds can transmit to humans. Even birds that appear healthy can be carriers of this disease. Because of the risk of psittacosis, birds (especially parrots, parakeets, macaws, pigeons, doves, etc.) should not be handled by children and should never be allowed to fly free in the classroom. Birds are not allowed as pets in the classroom

Chicks and Ducks—Chicks and ducks can spread salmonella to humans. This disease can be life threatening in very young children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems. These animals should not be handled by children, pregnant women or individuals with infants at home. Anyone handling chicks or ducks should wash their hands thoroughly, immediately following contact. These are not allowed as pets in the classroom.

Guinea Pigs, Hamsters, Gerbils, Rabbits—Healthy guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils and rabbits pose a limited health risk. However, even tame animals may react aggressively in strange situation; therefore, student contact with animals should always be closely supervised, and animals should not be allowed to run loose in the classroom. These are not allowed as pets in the classroom.

Children should not be allowed to “kiss” these animals and should not be allowed to handle or clean up any form of animal waste or clean animal cages. Anyone handling such animals should wash their hands thoroughly immediately following contact.

Fish—Fish pose very limited health risk and may be allowed in the classroom. Disposable gloves should be worn when cleaning aquariums, and tank water should not be disposed of in sinks that are used for food preparation or drinking water.