

Animals in Schools

1. The principal shall approve the instructional purpose for each animal in school, and no animal shall come into a school without the principal's prior written approval.
2. If the request is approved, the Superintendent or designee (District Safety Office) will be notified before any animals are brought into school.
3. Before introducing any animal(s) into the classroom, the teacher shall ascertain the following:
 - Students and school personnel are not allergic to the animal(s).
 - The animal(s) will present no physical danger to students.
 - Students will be instructed in the proper care and handling of the animal(s).
4. Animals shall not be allowed to roam freely in the school.
5. Animals shall be housed in suitable, sanitary, self-contained enclosures appropriate to the size of the animal, or the animal shall be kept on a leash.
6. Teachers will be responsible for ensuring that animal enclosures are kept in sanitary condition.
7. Animals shall not be left in schools during holiday periods where practical (exception is fish in tanks), and teachers are responsible for making arrangements for their care.
8. Dogs and cats brought to school must have a health certificate signed by a licensed veterinarian.
9. Students shall not transport any form of animal life on a school bus.
10. Students and staff shall not bring dead animals to school for any reason. Teachers may secure such animals for study from a reliable science supply house.

General Guidelines

Animals brought onto school campuses shall be clean and healthy so that the risk of transmitting diseases to students is minimal. Children tend to be more susceptible to zoonotic diseases (diseases which can be transferred from animals to man) and parasites

than adults as they are less likely to carefully wash hands and are more apt to put their hands in their mouths. Animals that children handle should be well groomed and free of internal parasites and disease. All animals should also be free of external parasites such as fleas, ticks, and mites to decrease the likelihood of the animal transmitting these vectors to students.

Proper Restraint of Animals

No animal shall be allowed to roam unrestrained on the school campus or in classrooms. Animals may react strangely to classroom situations, and there must be an effective way to control them. Fear may cause an animal to attempt to escape or even act aggressively in situations that are unusual to them. Appropriate restraint devices allow the holder to react quickly and prevent harm to the students or escape of the animal.

- All animals shall be restricted to the area designated by the principal.
- Collars and Leashes – Dogs and cats should wear a proper collar, harness, and/or leash when on school grounds or in the classroom so that they can be easily controlled. Household rope or string is not considered an appropriate restraint tool. The owner or person responsible for the animal should stay with the animal during its visit to the school.
- Birds should never be allowed to fly free in a classroom.

Special Conditions for Specific Animals

- **Parrots, Parakeets, Budgies, and Cockatiels** – can carry zoonotic diseases such as psittacosis and shall not be handled by children in school.
- **Ferrets** – can visit in a classroom but must be handled only by the person responsible for them. Children in school shall not handle or hold ferrets due to the animal's propensity to bite when startled.
- **Reptiles and Amphibians** – can carry salmonellosis, even when reared as pets or for display, and they shall not be handled by children in school except under close adult supervision. No turtles with a carapace (shell) length less than four inches are allowed in schools. ***ALWAYS WASH HANDS THOROUGHLY AFTER HANDLING REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS.***
- **Fish** – aquariums are to be cleaned regularly, and disposable gloves should be worn when cleaning. Used tank water should be disposed of in sinks that do not supply drinking water for students or staff.
- **Guide, Hearing, and other Service Dogs and Law Enforcement Animals** – shall not be prohibited from being on school grounds or in classroom situations.

Animals Not Allowed in Schools

- **Wild Animals** – pose a risk for transmitting rabies as well as other zoonotic diseases and shall not be brought to schools or handled by children. Exceptions may be made if wild animals are presented at school by professionals who have

experience handling wildlife. **Bats, raccoons, skunks, and wild carnivores have a high incidence of rabies and shall not be permitted on school grounds under any circumstances (including recently killed animals).**

- **Poisonous Animals** – spiders, venomous insects, poisonous snakes, reptiles, and lizards shall be prohibited from being brought onto school grounds. Exceptions may be made if these animals are presented at school by professionals who have experience handling them.
- **Wolf-Hybrids** – are crosses between a wolf and a dog and shall not be brought to school because they have shown a propensity for aggression, especially toward young children.
- **Stray Animals** – shall not be brought onto school campuses because the health and vaccination status of these animals is not known.
- **Baby Chicks and Ducks** – shall not be allowed in schools due to the high risk of salmonellosis and campylobacteriosis.
- **Aggressive Animals** – that are bred or trained to demonstrate aggression toward humans and/or animals or animals which have demonstrated similar aggression in the past shall not be permitted on school grounds. Aggressive, unprovoked, or threatening behavior mandates an animal's immediate removal.

Approval of Animals in School

Classroom Pet

BEFORE bringing any pet to stay in the classroom, the teacher must submit a completed CLASSROOM PET REQUEST form to the principal. The form includes the following information:

- Educational Objective
- Plan of Care
- Safety and Health Considerations

The principal will review the CLASSROOM PET REQUEST. If the request is approved, the principal will give the signed approval to the teacher, and the animal may be housed in the classroom. If procedures established in this policy are not followed, the principal may rescind the approval and have the pet removed from the classroom.

Visiting Animal

BEFORE allowing any animal to visit in the classroom, the teacher must submit a completed VISITING ANIMAL REQUEST form to the principal. The form includes the following information:

- Educational Objective
- Plan of Care
- Safety and Health Considerations

The principal will review the VISITING ANIMAL REQUEST. If the request is approved, the principal will give the signed approval to the teacher, and the animal may visit in the classroom. If procedures established in this policy are not followed, the principal may rescind the approval and have the pet removed from the classroom.

Service Animals in Schools

A. Service Animal Uses

Service animals are animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheel-chairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure or performing other special tasks. Service animals are working animals, not pets.

Use of a service animal by a student with a disability will be allowed in school when it is determined that the student's disability requires such use in order to assist or accommodate access to the instructional program, school services and/or school activities.

Use of a service animal by an employee with a disability will be allowed when such use is necessary as a reasonable accommodation to enable the employee to perform the essential functions of their job or to access benefits of employment provided to all employees in the same job classification.

The use of a service animal by an individual with a disability will not be conditioned on the payment of a fee, security deposit or surcharge.

B. Requirements for Service Animal Access

Before a service animal will be permitted in school, on school property or at school sponsored events, the student's parent or the employee must provide a description of the task(s) the service animal is expected to perform in assisting the person with a disability.

The District will provide access to a person with a disability who needs a service animal provided that the tasks performed by the service animal are directly related to the disability; and the animal has been individually trained to perform a task, is housebroken; is free of disease and parasites, has a harness, leash or tether so it cannot run free and is under the control of the person with a disability.

A service animal must also be licensed and immunized in accordance with the laws, regulations and ordinances of the city of Gig Harbor, Pierce County, and the state of Washington.

C. Parents or Animal Handlers

Parents or animal handlers who will be present in school for the purpose of assisting a student with his/her service animal are required to submit to a sex offender registry and criminal back-ground check. In addition, parents and handlers must comply with all standards of conduct that apply to school employees and volunteers.

D. Removal or Exclusion of a Service Animal from School or School Property

The building principal or district administrator may request an individual with a disability to remove a service animal from school, a school sponsored activity or school property if the animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take

effective action to control the animal. Examples of the animal being out of control include, but are not limited to the following:

1. The presence of the animal poses a direct threat to the health and/or safety of others;
2. The animal significantly disrupts or interferes with the instruction program, school activities or student learning. However, annoyance on the part of the others is not an unreasonable risk to property or others to justify the removal of the service animal;
3. The presence of the animal would result in a fundamental alteration of any school program;
4. The individual in control of the animal fails to appropriately care for the animal, including feeding, exercising, taking outside for performance of excretory functions and cleaning up after the animal;
5. The animal fails to consistently perform the function(s)/service(s) to assist or accommodate the individual with the disability;
6. The animal is ill; or
7. The animal is not housebroken.

If the District excludes a service animal, it will provide the individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in the service, program or activity without having the service animal on the premises.

E. Service Animals at School-Sponsored Events

Individuals with disabilities may be accompanied by their service animals to events or activities open to the public that are held in schools or on school property.

The building administrator may revoke or exclude the service animals for the reasons set forth in paragraph "D" above.

F. Responsibility/Liability

1. Neither the District, nor its employees, are responsible for the cost, care or supervision of the service animal;
2. A service animal must be under the control of its handler. A service animal must also have a harness, leash or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash or other tether, or the use of the harness, leash or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (*e.g., voice control, signals or other effective means*); and

3. The owner/handler of the service animal is responsible for any and all damage caused by the service animal at school, on school premises or at school activities.

G. Appeals

A parent or employee whose service animal has been excluded or removed may appeal the decision to the Superintendent. If dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision, the parent or employee may appeal to the Board.

H. Resources

1. 504 Coordinator
14015 62nd Avenue, NW
Gig Harbor, WA 98332
(253) 530-1081
2. Superintendent of Public Instruction
Equity and Civil Rights Office
P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200
360.725.6162
3. Washington State Human Rights Commission
711 South Capitol Way, Suite 402
P.O. Box 42490
Olympia, WA 98504-2490
360.753.6770
4. Office of Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
915 Second Avenue, Room 3310
Seattle, WA 98174
206.607.1600

October 2015