

ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOL (INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES)

The Board of Education recognizes that the study of living things is essential to effective instruction in the life sciences. The primary goals for demonstrations and investigations involving animals are to achieve an interest in and an understanding of the life processes, to demonstrate biological principles, and to teach proper care and handling of animals. Therefore, the Board requires that any such instructional activities, investigations, and projects be well-planned and adequately supervised, and be conducted with a respect for life and an appreciation of the health and safety of both animals and students.

Instruction in the Humane Treatment of Animals

Students in elementary school must receive instruction in the humane treatment and protection of animals and the importance of the part they play in the economy of nature as well as the necessity of controlling the proliferation of animals that are subsequently abandoned and caused to suffer extreme cruelty. This instruction may be joined with work in literature, reading, language, nature study, or ethnology.

Study and Care of Live Animals

Any school which cares for or uses animals for study shall ensure that each animal in the school be afforded the following:

- a) Appropriate quarters;
- b) Sufficient space for the normal behavior and postural requirements of the species;
- c) Proper ventilation, lighting, and temperature control;
- d) Adequate food and clean drinking water; and
- e) Quarters which shall be cleaned on a regular basis and located in an area where undue stress and disturbance are minimized.

Dissection of Animals—Right to Opt-Out

Any student expressing a moral or religious objection to the performance or witnessing of the dissection of an animal, either wholly or in part, shall be provided the opportunity to undertake and complete an alternative project approved by the student's teacher. The student's objection must be substantiated in writing by the student's parent or legal guardian. Students who perform alternative projects shall not be penalized. At the start of each school year, teachers of courses that include animal dissection shall give written notice to the students enrolled in those courses of their opt-out rights. Such notice shall also be distributed to the students' parents or legal guardians and be made available upon request at the school.

Ref: Education Law § 809
8 NYCRR § 100.2(c)(8)

Adopted: February 15, 2012
Reaffirmed: April 8, 2015
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