

1 **Board Policies**

Blair-Taylor School District

2
3 **Series** 700

SUPPORT SERVICES

4 **Section:** 790

IEQ MANAGEMENT

5 **Policy #:** 790.1

ANIMALS-IN-THE-CLASSROOM

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8 **Introduction**

9 The presence of animals in schools provides many opportunities for addressing academic
10 standards and supporting the social/emotional growth of students. Animals are part of our
11 natural environment and can be used effectively as teaching aids. The positive benefits of the
12 human-animal bond are well established.

13 The presence of animals in schools may also pose a safety or health risk for some children
14 when they are exposed to allergens that activate allergy and/or asthma symptoms. Other
15 students may be afraid of animals and feel emotionally unsafe in their presence. The purpose of
16 this policy is to allow animals in the classroom while providing for the health and safety of
17 school staff, students, and animals. Animals will be removed from the classroom and/or the
18 school when this cannot be achieved.

19 **Animal Groups**

20 Animals may be brought into schools and classrooms for a variety of purposes. Each of the
21 purposes is listed below, along with required procedures to ensure the health and safety of staff,
22 students and animals.

23 **1. Animals Used In Educational Presentations**

24 Animals may be brought into schools by an animal handler for one day or less for
25 presentations to the whole school, several classrooms, or a single classroom. The animal
26 handler must have extensive knowledge and experience with the animal and experience
27 providing educational demonstrations on a regular basis.

28 **Procedures for Educational Presentations with Animals**

29 **A. Before bringing an animal into the school or a classroom,**

- 30 **▪ Staff must provide the principal with information about how the animal**
- 31 **will support the academic program or the social emotional development**
- 32 **of students.**
- 33 **▪ Upon enrollment all parents/guardians of students will be provided with**
- 34 **a letter.**
- 35 **▪ The letter must contain the following:**
 - 36 **▪ Information about any health concerns that could result**
 - 37 **from the animal's presence.**
 - 38 **▪ A paragraph that encourages parents to report to the**
 - 39 **principal any observable symptoms or concerns their**
 - 40 **child may exhibit in the presence of the animal.**

- 41 ▪ All letters must be translated to meet the language needs of non-
42 English speaking parents either in writing or through oral
43 translation.
44 ▪ **Written consent from parent/guardian is not required.**
45 ▪ Information that documents the animal is healthy and appropriate for
46 classroom use shall be made available for parent/guardian review. Such
47 documentation shall include:
48 ▪ A signed statement of health from an organization (e.g., Humane
49 Society) or veterinarian that states at the time of the examination
50 the animal is free of external and internal parasites or disease, and
51 has proof of current, necessary vaccinations, and
52 ▪ Verification that the animal's temperament is conducive to being
53 around children,
54 **or**
55 ▪ Verification that the animal is part of a presentation conducted by
56 an animal handler who has extensive knowledge and experience
57 with the animal and engages in educational demonstrations in a
58 school setting on a regular basis.
59 ▪ Students who require modifications due to animal fears or allergies or
60 who will be excluded from activities with animals will be provided
61 alternative activities that address the same concepts.
62 ▪ Students whose parents do not want them to participate in school
63 activities with animals will be excused.
64 B. The staff member bringing the animal into the school must obtain the written
65 approval of the principal.
66 ▪ Before granting permission, the principal shall be satisfied that all
67 requirements listed above have been met.

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69 2. **Animals Not Handled by Children**

70 Cold blooded animals that will not be handled by children may be brought into the
71 classrooms or school for observation and discussion for up to one semester. There is no
72 limit on the number of extensions. For example, an aquarium may be placed in the
73 Library Media Center or in a classroom.

74 **Procedures for Cold Blooded Animals Not Handled by Children**

- 75 A. Before bringing a cold blooded animal into the school or classroom,
76 ▪ Staff must provide the principal with information about how the animal
77 will support the academic program or the social emotional development
78 of students.
79 ▪ Upon enrollment all parents/guardians of students will be provided with
80 a letter.
81 ▪ The letter must contain the following:
82 ▪ Information about any health concerns that could result
83 from the animal's presence.

- 130 ▪ The letter that will be sent to parents/guardians of students who will be
131 exposed to the animal.
 - 132 ▪ All letters must be translated to meet the language needs of non-
133 English speaking parents either in writing or through oral
134 translation.
 - 135 ▪ The letter must contain the following:
 - 136 ▪ the type and number of animals that will be present,
 - 137 ▪ the MMSD academic standards, and/or the social-
138 emotional objectives that the animal's presence will
139 support,
 - 140 ▪ the length of time the animal will be present,
 - 141 ▪ the animal's location and enclosure,
 - 142 ▪ information about any health concerns that could result
143 from the animal's presence,
 - 144 ▪ a paragraph that encourages parents to report to the
145 principal any observable symptoms or concerns their
146 child may exhibit in the presence of the animal.
 - 147 ▪ **Written parent consent must be obtained in response to the**
148 **letter.**
 - 149 ▪ If a parent requests that modifications be made for a
150 student who, for example, has allergies or is afraid of
151 animals, the teacher may develop an alternative plan for
152 each such student that does not interfere with or adversely
153 affect the education of the child. (The plan shall also be
154 approved by the parent and principal). Animals will be
155 removed from the classroom and/or the school when the
156 health and safety of the child cannot be achieved.
- 157 ▪ Information that documents the animal is healthy and appropriate for
158 classroom use shall be made available for parent/guardian review. Such
159 documentation shall include:
 - 160 ▪ A signed statement of health from an organization (e.g., the
161 Humane Society) or veterinarian that ensures that the animal is
162 free of external and internal parasites or disease, and has proof of
163 current, necessary vaccinations, **and**
 - 164 ▪ Verification that the animal's temperament is conducive to being
165 around children.

166 B. Staff bringing the animal to school must also:

- 167 ▪ Provide instruction for students in the proper care and handling of the
168 animal.
 - 169 ▪ Students may only care for or handle animals under the
170 supervision of a staff member.
 - 171 ▪ Instruction should include a plan of action should a student, staff
172 member, or animal be in danger.
 - 173 ▪ Instruction should include a plan of action to ensure that animals
174 are not abused, mistreated or neglected.
- 175 ▪ Identify the area in which the animal will be housed.
 - 176 ▪ Free roaming animals are not permitted in the classroom or on
177 the school premises.

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- Provide an appropriate plan and be responsible for cleaning the area in which the animal is housed, as well as the proper disposal of animal waste.
 - Students shall not be allowed to handle or clean up any form of animal waste (feces, urine, blood, soiled bedding, etc.). When staff are disposing of animal waste and/or cleaning up, the following procedures must be followed:
 - Dispose animal wastes where children cannot come into contact with it, such as in a plastic bag or a container with a well fitted lid or via the sewage system for feces.
 - Wear disposable gloves and wash hands after glove removal.
 - Clean cages, surfaces, and sinks using disinfecting guidelines.
 - Ensure that animals are not allowed in the vicinity of sinks where children wash their hands, in any area where food is prepared, or stored, or in areas used for storage of food utensils or dishes.
- C. Because of the potential risk for salmonella infection, the following additional procedures should be used for reptiles and amphibians:
 - Reptiles and amphibians are not appropriate for classrooms with children under age five or in classrooms with students whose immune systems are compromised.
 - Reptiles should never be allowed to roam freely outside of their cage or enclosure. If they are removed for a limited period, any hard surface touched by the reptile must be cleaned and disinfected using a 10% bleach solution and water prior to allowing students in the area.
 - After any direct contact with reptiles, amphibians, or their enclosures, students must immediately wash hands with warm soapy water for at least 15 seconds or use antibacterial hand sanitizer with 60% - 70% alcohol content.
 - Reptiles must never be near sinks or counters that may be used for food preparation.
- D. The staff member bringing the animal into the school must obtain the written approval of the principal or principal designee.
 - Before granting permission, the principal shall be satisfied that all requirements listed above have been met.
 - Once granted, this approval may be rescinded or revoked by the principal if the policies and procedures are not followed.
 - Written approval is valid for a maximum of one semester, at which time the teacher may re-submit the request for an extension of up to one semester. There is no limit on the number of extensions.
- 4. **Animals Excluded from School or Classroom Use by the Policy**
 - Because poisonous, venomous animals are dangerous if mishandled, they are not appropriate in school settings and are not permitted on school premises under this policy.
 - A family pet is prohibited on school premises unless the family pet meets the requirements set forth in this policy and procedures.
- 5. **Animals Exempt From Compliance with the Policy**

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The following animals are exempt from compliance with this policy:

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- Trained and certified (service) animals which support individual students and/or adults with disabilities.

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- Neither the permission of the principal, principal designee, nor any other provision in this policy or procedure shall be used to limit the right of a person with disabilities to be on school premises with his/her specially trained and certified service animal as provided by section 174.056 of Wisconsin State Statute.

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- Animals from the Science Materials Center used in grades K-8 science curriculum.

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- MMSD K-8 Science Scope and Sequence incorporates the use of a variety of animals in the science curriculum. These animals directly support the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in Science.

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- All animals that are used in the K-8 Science Scope and Sequence are distributed through the Science Materials Center with specific documentation describing appropriate care, feeding, handling and health issues for each organism.

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- Invertebrates for specific use with the grades 9 - 12 science curriculum.

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- Any live non-poisonous and non-venomous invertebrates and fish may be used in the high school biological sciences program under the supervision of a certified biology instructor for the purpose of meeting the life science standards as described in the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.

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- The use of animals in the high school biological sciences program must meet the standards approved by the National Science Teacher's Association, the National Biology Teacher's Association and the Institute for Laboratory Animal Research.

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- Under these conditions, District employees do not have to obtain the approval of the principal or follow the procedures set forth herein.

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- Preserved specimens for dissection are excluded.

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Additional Requirements

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1. Transportation

- Animals may not be transported to and/or from school on yellow school buses or via any other transportation provided by the School District.

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2. Communication

- The principal will inform parents, staff and the PTO about the policy and include it in the parent handbook, yearly.

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3. Conditions Requiring Animals To Be Immediately Removed From School Premises

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- A. If a student or staff member has an allergic reaction or other health problem because of the presence of an animal, the animal must be immediately removed from the classroom/work space of the affected individual, and removed from the school grounds until the situation is resolved.

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- B. If an animal is aggressive, the animal must be immediately isolated and removed from the school grounds by the District.

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- 271 C. If a student, staff member or anyone else on school premises is injured by an
272 animal:
- 273 ▪ the animal shall be isolated immediately,
 - 274 ▪ an Injury Report will be completed and submitted to the principal if the
275 injury requires treatment outside the classroom,
 - 276 ▪ appropriate medical care shall be provided to the person who has been
277 injured, and
 - 278 ▪ the principal or designee shall notify the owner of the animal of the
279 injury, and request that the animal be removed from the school grounds
280 until the situation is resolved.
- 281 D. If an animal consistently has a powerful unpleasant odor that cannot be resolved,
282 the animal will be removed.
- 283 E. If an animal disrupts the classroom learning environment (e.g., shrieking of a
284 bird), the animal will be removed.
- 285 F. If an animal exhibits any signs of illness and/or distress, the animal will be
286 immediately isolated and removed from the school grounds.
- 287 G. If there is an outstanding air quality complaint that has been filed under the
288 District's indoor air quality procedure, no animals, except service dogs as
289 provided by section 174.056 of the Wisconsin State Statute, shall be present on
290 school premises.

291 If problems are resolved through modifications or adaptations in how the animal is
292 managed, the animal may be returned to the classroom with the written consent of the
293 principal or principal designee.

294 4. **No Animal Training by School Employees**

295 Training animals while in pay status as an employee of the District is prohibited. This
296 provision shall not be construed to restrict an employee from training an animal while
297 such employee is not working for the District.

298 5. **Appeal Process**

299 Teachers may appeal the decision of the principal to allow an animal to be present in the
300 school with the Superintendent. The appeal must be in writing and filed within ten days
301 of the denial.

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305 **LEGAL REFERENCE:**

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First Reading: 1/21/13

Adopted: 2/18/13

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Clerk: _____