



## **Animals in the Classroom**

Most educators recognize that animals have educational value in the school setting, but only under conditions that insure safety and well being of the students, staff, and the animal. Typically, live animals may be brought into the classroom as part of a written curriculum with approval of the building principal and providing the provisions of the school's policy are met. These policies should include a survey of student and staff health concerns and final approval by the building principal before the animal is brought to school.

According to the CDC, some people are more likely than others to get diseases from animals. A person's age and health status may affect their immune system, increasing his or her chances of getting diseases from animals. Some individuals with asthma may be affected by certain pet dander. However, immunocompromised persons and parents of young children generally do not need to be overly concerned with common household pets in a school setting.

Some basic precautions include:

- Institute an Animal in School Policy at the Board Level
- Insure Principals are aware of policy and enforce it.
- Perform a regular review of student/staff questionnaires.
- Have all animals health checked out by a veterinarian.
- Young children should be supervised while interacting with animals. Extra care may be necessary with certain types of animals.
- Hands should be washed thoroughly with running water and soap after contact with animals. This is especially important before eating or handling food.
- Avoid reptiles such as snakes, lizards, and turtles. If you touch any reptile, immediately wash your hands well with soap and water.
- Immediately remove any problem animals and report the incident.

Through the help of other Districts, EMC has organized a standardized Animal in Schools Policy that is very similar to what is in place in other Districts. Please contact EMC for more information or sample policies.



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