

SHERBURNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Animal Policy

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

Certain animals are recognized as having inherent risk and may only be brought onto the school property with prior notice and permission of the principal.

Guidelines for Allowing or Prohibiting Animals at School

Each school will determine whether the following animals are allowed or prohibited. Any animal that is allowed in the school or on school grounds must be clean and healthy to minimize the risk of disease being transmitted to students and teachers. Any education with animals should include proper hygiene and hand washing procedures and 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.

Animal cages or tanks should be cleaned thoroughly on a regular basis. Students should not be allowed to handle or clean on 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 their hands immediately after completing the task.

Children with allergies or those with immune deficiencies may be especially susceptible to diseases transmitted by animals or allergic reactions; therefore special precautions may be needed to minimize risks. Consultation with the school nurse and the child's parents about precautionary measures is strongly advised.

Guidelines for Specific Animals

Birds - Psittacosis is a serious disease that infects birds and can be transmitted 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.

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, immediately following contact.

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.

Poisonous Animals - Spiders, venomous insects and poisonous snakes, reptiles one lizards may be prohibited for safety reasons.

Guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, rabbits - Healthy guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils and rabbits pose ~ limited health risk. Such animals may be allowed as classroom pets or as occasional visitors with advance notification to the principal and teacher and under the strict supervision of an adult. Even tame animals may react aggressively in strange situations; therefore, student contact with animals should always be closely supervised and animals should not be allowed to run loose in the classroom.

Children should not be allowed to "kiss" these animals and should not be allowed to handle or cleanup any form of animal waste or clean the animal's cage. Anyone handling such animals should wash their hands thoroughly, immediately following contact.

Fish - Fish pose a 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.

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Implementing and Communicating the Animal Policy

To effectively protect students and staff, this Animal Policy must be followed by the entire school community. Parents, teachers, school nurses and other staff must be reminded of the policy on a regular basis and know of its provisions.

The town of Killington has a leash ordinance and all animals visiting the school shall be on a leash.

Adopted: March 14, 2000

Clerk: Ray Cannata

Reviewed: 3/11/2008

Clerk: Jennifer Iannantuoni

Reviewed: November 19, 2010

Clerk: Kristin Schiessl-Alf