Washington County School District
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Administrative Letter A156

Animals in School

Administrative Letter #A156 Animals in School - Approved 4/26/21

Date: April 26, 2021

Approved by: Superintendent Larry Bergeson

Subject: Animals in School

This letter is drafted to create a consistent and comprehensive resource regarding classroom pets and other animals brought into Washington County Schools (WCSD). While the topic of service animals is mentioned, this letter is not designed to address ADA compliance. Questions regarding ADA compliance may be directed to the HR Benefits Coordinator, Student Services Director, or found at ADA.gov.

DEFINITIONS

- Animal
    - Includes but is not limited to mammals, amphibians, reptiles, insects, and birds
- Classroom Pet
    - A live animal that is housed within a WCSD facility or within its grounds
- Dangerous Animal
    - Such animals include, but are not limited to: venomous or constrictor snakes, bats, rats/mice, spiders, and poisonous insects.
- House/Housing
    - Cages, tanks, kennels, crates, pens, coups, or other enclosures used for an animal habitat.

- Personal Pets
    - Domestic or tamed animals kept for companionship.
- Service Animal
    - Qualifying animals under the ADA that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability.
    - Emotional support, comfort animals, and therapy dogs are not service animals under Title II and Title III of the American with Disabilities Act (28 C.F.R. Part 35).

GENERAL

- Classroom pets
    - Excepting small bird coops and rabbit housing, WCSD does not permit classroom pets in its facilities or on its grounds.
- Hatching chicks
    - Chick hatching shall be done using commercially manufactured brooders.
    - Heat lamps shall not be used to warm chicks.
- Dangerous animals
    - WCSD does not permit dangerous animals in its facilities or on its grounds
- Personal Pets and All Other Animals
    - Personal pets and other animals may be brought onto WCSD grounds and into its facilities provided the following criteria are met:
        - The animal(s) serves an educational or curricular purpose
        - The animal(s) remains on the property for a temporary duration and is removed immediately following the demonstration or presentation
        - Animals must never be sent home with students
        - Animals must be caged, or otherwise controlled by harnesses, leashes or tethers at all times while on WCSD grounds or within those facilities
        - Personnel shall receive explicit permission in writing to bring an animal onsite from the building supervisor or administrator no less than 24 hours before any demonstration or event. Written permission shall include the animal type, purpose and duration of its presence on our grounds.
- Service Animals
    - Service animals must be regarded as such when in WCSD facilities or on the grounds.

- Whenever service animals are on WCSD grounds or within its facilities, they must be controlled by harnesses, leashes or tethers, or if using such interferes with the animal's duty, the animal must be controlled by voice control, signals or other effective means.

- Preserved Specimens
  - Dead animals may be frozen or preserved in fluid for educational purposes
    - Formaldehyde is strictly regulated and cannot be used to preserve specimens
  - Fluid preserved specimens shall be sealed in containers that cannot leak.
    - The storage of unfrozen or unpreserved specimens in sacks or bags is inappropriate and creates a hazard to human health.
    - Specimens must be stored within commercially manufactured containers explicitly designed for that purpose.
  - Consumable food may not be placed within Agricultural Science classroom refrigeration units designed for specimen storage.
    - This includes, but is not limited to, condiments, party refreshments, snacks, and meals.

CTE AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL SCIENCE CLASSES

- Small Bird Coops and Rabbit Housing:
  - Teachers must receive written approval prior to use of chicken coops or rabbit housing.
  - Chicken coops and rabbit housing shall be kept clean and maintained in a manner that promotes good housekeeping and best safety practices. Safety hazards shall be corrected in a timely manner.
  - Chickens and other fowl housed in bird coops shall be properly fed and watered.
  - Teachers will coordinate with the CTE department to determine approved enclosures to house poultry/fowl and rabbits.
  - Rabbit enclosures shall be commercially manufactured and will include, but not be limited to, the following:
    - A tray to prevent fecal matter and waste from falling to the ground
    - Rust resistant metal fittings where applicable

- Greenhouses
  - Excepting within approved poultry/fowl coops or rabbit hutches, greenhouses are not designed for animal housing and should not be used for that purpose
  - The cost of maintenance, damage, and repairs resulting from inappropriately housing animals in greenhouses will be the responsibility of the school, not the maintenance or CTE department.

- Livestock
    - Students that engage in extracurricular livestock raising activities such as FFA or county sponsored livestock shows are responsible to procure and maintain their own space to house, feed, groom, and otherwise care for animals is the responsibility of the student
    - WCSD personnel shall not enter into any rental, purchase or other agreement to secure property for official school use. Such agreements must be performed by the Assistant Superintendent over land acquisitions
    - Livestock shall not be housed in WCSD facilities or on its campuses