



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: Animals in the Classroom

The Lambton Kent District School Board strives to ensure a safe and healthy work environment for all staff and students. The Board recognizes that live animals in the classroom can provide an enhanced learning experience for students. The purpose of this procedure is to provide expectations and guidelines for all staff to follow when housing an animal within the classroom to ensure the safety of both building occupants and the animal.

General Responsibilities:

The Lambton Kent District School Board is responsible to ensure that there is a procedure in place to ensure that animals are treated in a humane and caring environment and that health & safety of building occupants is considered wherever animals are brought into a school. In addition, the LKDSB shall take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of workers and students.

School principals and supervisors will ensure that this “Animal in the Classroom Procedure” is implemented and used wherever animals are brought into a classroom. Principals / supervisors are responsible to take every precaution reasonable under the circumstances to protect workers and students.

All workers are required to comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Lambton-Kent District School Board’s policy and procedures. Workers are required to report any concerns regarding health & safety to their School Principal / Supervisor.

Approval and Selection of Animal:

1. This procedure is intended for use by classroom teachers wishing to either house an animal in the general classroom or bring an animal into the classroom for a visit. It is not intended to include or provide guidance on the use of service animals or animals that are used in the Secondary Science Program or for secondary school animal experimentation purposes.
2. A classroom teacher wishing to bring an animal into the classroom must first receive principal approval. If the animal is to be housed in the classroom then the classroom teacher responsible for the animal must complete the “Request to House an Animal in a Classroom Form” attached as Appendix 1.

3. Principals, prior to approving a request for an animal to be brought into the school, must consider:
 - a. whether there are any health issues, such as allergic sensitivities of any building occupants to the type of animal being considered; in the event that a student or staff member has an allergic reaction to a classroom animal, it should be removed from the school;
 - b. whether there are any student or staff fears in regards to a specific type of animal.
 - c. Whether there are adequate measures in place to ensure the well being of the animal;
 - d. whether the facilities, including cages, within the classroom or building where the animal is to visit or be housed are adequate for the health & safety and humane care of the animal.
4. Classroom teachers should only select animals that are small and that can be easily confined, maintained and handled when choosing an animal to be housed within a classroom. Common examples are tropical fish, small mammals and some reptiles and amphibians such as gerbils, guinea pigs, mice, rats, lizards and salamanders. Larger animals such as rabbits, dogs and cats, which although may be suitable for a visit, should not be housed in the classroom. Due to health reasons, turtles and birds are not allowed to be housed in a classroom.
5. Newborn chicks may be hatched in the classroom if the supplying farm / barn have a salmonella-free certification. This certification must be confirmed by the Principal before the eggs are brought into a classroom.
6. Classroom should only select animals known to be in good health and free of disease to be housed in a classroom. The health of an animal is normally assured when the animal is purchased from a reputable pet store or breeder. Well- managed house pets are also presumed to be healthy and safe.
7. Classroom teachers should to the best of their ability choose an animal that is not inclined to bite or scratch when handled.
8. Principals and/or classroom teachers should confirm the past history of the animal prior to allowing it into the school as a visitor. Only animals known to be in good health and free of disease should be brought into the school for a visit.

Care of Animals Kept in the Classroom:

1. The classroom teacher must ensure that the animal receives adequate care and that it is not abused in any way. This means that there shall be sufficient water and food available to the animal at all times and that room temperature remains in an acceptable range. It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to ensure that they have sufficient knowledge of the housing and feeding requirements for the specific animal that is being housed.

2. The classroom teacher should develop and post specific animal care procedures in the classroom. These procedures should be posted and reviewed with students and made available to the principal and as required occasional staff.
3. The classroom teacher is responsible to ensuring that there is an adequate plan in place for care of the animal on weekends, holidays and extended breaks and that there is a permanent home in place to provide safe and humane care to the animal at the end of the animal's stay period. This plan should be shared with and approved by the principal prior to the bringing the animal into the school.
4. It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to ensure the animal is maintained in a secure environment such as a cage. Animals shall not be allowed to roam freely around the classroom and/or school.
5. The classroom teacher is responsible for the cleanliness of the animal's habitat /cage. All animal waste and cage material must be placed in a sealed plastic bag and removed from the school to the exterior dumpster. It is not the responsibility of Building Services (i.e. custodial staff, etc.) to clean or maintain animal habitats.
6. The classroom teacher is responsible to observe the animal each school day to ensure that it appears healthy and free from injury. The classroom teacher must be prepared to deal with unexpected death or injury to an animal housed in the classroom. In the event of an animal's death, the animal should be disposed of safely and in manner that is humane and sensitive to student emotions.

Other Considerations:

1. To guard against bites and scratches, it is wise to use gloves when handling any animal. However, accidents do occur and the classroom teacher and the school principal must be prepared to deal with bites and scratches that staff or students might receive while handling the animals. If a scratch or bite breaks the surface of the skin, immediately clean the affected area and report the incident to the principal.
2. It should be noted that superficial wounds that do not break the skin are not normally a problem as long as the animal involved is healthy. Significant wounds should be checked by a doctor. In all cases, the animal involved should be kept for several days after a wounding incident in case medical or veterinary officials wish to observe or test the animal.
3. All staff members and students shall immediately wash their hands with soap and water after handling any animal.
4. Animals in the classroom should be maintained in a manner to prevent disease or unplanned pregnancy, whenever possible.

Implementation Date: June 4, 2013

Reference:

Appendix 1 – Request to House Animal in a Classroom

School: _____

Teacher:	Room Number:
Type of Animal(s) & Number:	Gender of Animal:
Source of Animal (i.e. Pet Store, Breeder, etc.) Please include Name, address and contact information:	
Brief rationale for this request to house animal(s) in classroom:	
Brief Description of how the applicant intends to care for Animal in classroom:	

Brief Description of how applicant intends to ensure the Animal is cared for properly on weekend, holidays, and periods extended break:

Brief Description of plan for animal once period of stay in the classroom is complete:

Name of alternate person (i.e. teacher/ educational assistant, etc.) who will assume responsibility for the animal when the applicant is unavailable:

Initials of alternate: _____

Signature of Applicant: _____

Upon signing this it is understood that the applicant assumes responsibility for the “Care” of the Animal and that the applicant has read and understood the Board’s Administrative Procedure regarding Animals in the Classroom. Any changes to the information provided on this request will be reported to the School Principal and initialed and attached to this application.

Approval of Principal: _____