

4.50 BIOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTATION ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

A. Biological Experimentation

Surgery on or dissection on any living mammalian vertebrate or bird by students in grades K-12 is prohibited. Dissections are allowed on preserved specimens obtained from a recognized source. Such dissections must be carried out under the supervision of a qualified instructor. ~~Students may be excused from dissection activities upon written request of a parent or guardian.~~ Living non-mammalian vertebrates, excluding birds, may be used in biological experiments, provided that physiological harm does not result from such experiments. Anatomical studies must be conducted on models, which are anatomically correct for the animal being studied or on nonliving non-mammalian vertebrates. Students may be excused from such experiments and from dissection activities upon written request by of the parent or guardian. ~~Alternative work to dissection will be determined by the~~ The teacher, with approval from the school administrator, will determine what work is to be assigned as an alternative to dissection. Observational studies of vertebrate animal cells acquired from proper sources, and normal physiological and behavioral studies may be conducted. All experiments must be conducted under the supervision of a competent science teacher.

B. Animals in the Classroom

The maintenance of live animals in the classroom solely as pets is discouraged. The maintenance of live animals in the classroom for a limited time as a teaching tool based upon appropriate teaching objectives is encouraged. The decision to allow any living animal in the school or on the school grounds shall be made by the school principal and must be based upon a plan submitted to the principal by the teacher, which outlines and supports the educational objectives promoted by the presence of the animal, the appropriateness of the particular animal selected and a plan of care for the animal which includes maintenance on weekends, holidays, extended breaks and at the end of the year.

Live animals on the premises of public and non-public elementary and secondary schools must be housed and cared for in a humane and safe manner. Animals must not remain on the premises of any school during periods when school is not in session, unless adequate care is provided. Arrangements must be made in advance for the feeding and care of animals during school vacations. Assigning or allowing students or their families this responsibility will be permitted only if the appropriate release of liability is executed by the parents of the student acting as the animal caretaker.

The teacher is ultimately responsible for the care of any animals used for instructional purposes in the classroom. Students are not to be assigned the responsibility of handling, feeding or cleaning cages/aquariums of the animals. Evening custodial staff and weekend/holiday care givers should be instructed as to what should be done should an emergency arise involving the animal.

Many animals carry allergens, diseases, bacteria and parasites which may be transmitted to humans and cause serious illness. (Examples: dander, mites, Salmonella and tapeworms) Although handling of animals by children is discouraged, the teacher is expected to be knowledgeable concerning safe handling practices and personal cleanliness regarding animals and is expected to ensure that children practice handling and sanitation procedures.

Local, state and national laws, policies and regulations relative to the acquisition, care, disposition, temperament and protection (in the case of exotic, threatened or endangered species) of animals should be consulted prior to introduction of such animals into the classroom environment.

The provisions of this policy are not to be construed to prohibit or constrain conventional instruction in the normal practices of animal husbandry or exhibition of any livestock in connection with any agricultural program on instruction or advanced students participating in advanced research, scientific studies, or projects.

If any employee fails or refuses to comply with the provisions of this policy, the School Board may dismiss, return to annual contract, or otherwise discipline that employee.

(Ref. F.S. 1001.42)(Adopted: 09/12/85, Amended: 02/17/94, 00/00/00)