



Guidelines on Pets in the Classroom

In Rock Hill Schools, we believe classroom pets can be entertaining and engaging for students. While, classroom pets can be fun, we must also keep in mind potential hazards due to microorganisms and allergies. In order to keep students and school personnel safe in the company of classroom pets, Rock Hill Schools has developed the policy detailed below.

General Guidelines Regarding Animals in Classrooms

- Any pet in the classroom should be an animal that is necessary to help students meet the learning goals of the course.
- Students and teachers must always wash their hands with soap and water immediately after handling animals, animals' food, or other animal habitat contents such as cages, food bowls, or toys. Hand sanitizer should only be used if soap and water is not available. An adult must supervise hand-washing.
- The teacher, not students, must clean and disinfect all areas where the animal has been with a commercial disinfectant solution.
- Animal tanks, feeders, water containers, and other equipment must never be cleaned in sinks or areas where food is prepared, served, or eaten. The teacher must be the person to clean up after classroom pets. ^[A]
- Any solid animal waste must be removed from the animal area each day. ^[B]
- All student interaction with animals must be supervised by the teacher.
- A specific area for animal interaction must be created within the classroom. Animals must not be allowed to roam about throughout classroom.
- Any bite or scrape by a classroom pet must immediately be reported to the teacher who must then notify the school nurse.
- The school's principal must be made aware and approve of learning goals to be aided by the use of a classroom pet. The principal must sign the **Parent/Guardian Permission to Experience Classroom Pets** form BEFORE it is sent to parents.
- Parents of all students must be notified of an animal coming into the classroom and sign the **Parent/Guardian Permission to Experience Classroom Pets** form BEFORE any animal is brought into the classroom.
- Animals provided through a district-purchased science kit, will not require the signature of principal or parents.

The following animals (types of animals) are NOT allowed in Rock Hill Schools:

- Reptiles, amphibians, chickens, and ducks are not permitted in classrooms with children younger than 5-years of age.
- Carnivores. Carnivores are flesh-eating animals that known to carry rabies. Carnivores include, but are not limited to, raccoons, foxes, skunks, and bobcats and related species including, but not limited to, coyotes, wolves, wolf dogs, weasels, civet cats, spotted skunks, and lynx or the offspring born to any combinations of crossbreeding between these wild animals and domestic dogs or cats. [D]
- Ferrets or other animals that have a tendency to attack humans even without provocation. [D]
- Wild animals. These include but are not limited to bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes, and coyotes as they are likely to spread rabies.
- Venomous (poisonous) or toxin-producing animals. These include most spiders_[C], some insects, and some reptiles. Frogs, snakes, lizards, and some amphibians also may be venomous. The teacher is responsible for researching the specific animal BEFORE bringing it to the classroom.
- Nonhuman primates, including monkeys or apes.
- Stray animals.
- Aggressive animals.
- Unpredictable animals.
- Endangered animals.
- No living, vertebrate animal may be used for the purpose of experimentation or dissection. Animals used for the purpose of dissection must be preserved and secured from a recognized source. Observational studies of living, vertebrate animals are permitted, provided no treatment is applied.

Sources of Information used to develop this policy:

[A]<https://www.cdc.gov/features/animalsinschools/index.html>

[B]https://projects.ncsu.edu/ehs/www99/right/handsMan/animal/forms/an_cge_wash.pdf

[C]<https://www.terminix.com/blog/bug-facts/are-all-spiders-poisonous>

[D]<http://www.dhec.sc.gov/Health/DiseasesandConditions/InfectiousDiseases/InsectAnimalBorne/Rabies/LawsRegulations/>