

ANIMALS ON DISTRICT PROPERTY

Background

The District strives to ensure the health and safety of students, staff, and others on District property. Further, the District recognizes that there are valid instructional and/or therapeutic reasons for animals to be on District property. By “instructional purposes” is meant that the presence of animals directly supports the learning strategies or the achievement of the objective of an approved educational program. An acceptance to this practice shall be animals such as service or guide dogs. Under no circumstances shall animals that pose actual or potential safety and/or health risks to students and employees be allowed in schools or classrooms.

Administrative Procedures

1. The Principal must provide approval to have the animals brought into schools for instructional purposes.
2. Prior to allowing animals in schools or classrooms, steps are to be taken to ensure that students and employees are not allergic to or fearful of the presence of these animals, that the animals will present no physical danger to students or employees, and that the animals are free from diseases or parasites. The above notwithstanding, animals are permitted to be on District property to support prescribed learning outcomes and/or for therapeutic purposes, again, with the prior written approval of the Associate Superintendent, or designate. Animals which may be permitted on District property include but may not be limited to the following:
 - 2.1 Trained service or guide dogs brought by a person with a disability, as defined in the *BC Guide Dog and Service Dog Act*, “Service Dogs” are those trained to assist individuals who utilize a wheelchair. “Guide Dogs” are those trained as a guide for a person who is blind or visually impaired.
Police dogs under the control of a police officer,
 - 2.2 Well-mannered pets brought for short visits during a day for instructional purposes such as “show and tell” or for a demonstration at a school assembly.
 - 2.3 Small animals kept in the classroom or school under the supervision and care of a teacher. The teacher shall have a definite instructional purpose for maintaining these animals in the classroom.
3. Small animals such as hamsters or gerbils maintained in the classrooms or school shall be kept confined in a cage, or an aquarium, in the case of fish. Dogs or cats shall not be confined in a cage.

4. Prior to bringing any animal onto District property, the Principal or designate shall ensure that no children or youth with allergies or who are fearful of the animal will be adversely affected. Parents should be informed when animals are in the classroom or school and should give consent for their child to be in and environment with the animal. (See sample letter in Appendix A).
5. Animals brought into the school for instructional or therapeutic purposes shall be healthy, under the teacher's care and control, or that of a responsible adult, and highly unlikely to scratch or bite.
6. While at the school, the animals shall be safely cared for and treated humanely.
7. A plan shall be in place to care for the animal when school is not in session and when the unit of study is completed.
8. The Principal may withdraw permission for the animal to be at school or on school grounds at any time if animal hygiene, animal welfare, student safety, or staff safety becomes an issue.

Reference: Sections 8, 17, 20, 22, 65, 85, 177 School Act

SD No. 40 (New Westminster)

Adopted: May 30, 2017

Revised: May 29, 2018

Modification to this document is not permitted without prior written consent from SD No. 40 (New Westminster)