

POLICY

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

File Code:6163.3

LIVE ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM

Domesticated animals may be brought into the classroom for educational purposes that enhance the educational program. Educational purposes may include activities related to academics, interest, handling experience, enrichment, therapy, as well as other purposes related to social and emotional health. The chief school administrator or his or her designee shall ensure that the wellbeing and safety of the students and the animal are protected.

Guidelines as established by the American Humane Association, "Care and Management of Animal Visitors at School," are available in the school office and media center and adhered to by classroom teachers wishing to have animals in the classroom. Animals are to be in good health.

Animals must be appropriately housed, humanely cared for and handled, according to the following guidelines:

- A. Only the teacher or students designated by the teacher are to handle the animals;
- B. If animals are to be kept in the classroom on days when classes are not in session, the teacher must make arrangements for their care and safety;
- C. Teachers with questions regarding proper care, feeding and handling of animals should contact the science resource teacher or the principal;
- D. The teacher must assume responsibility for the humane proper treatment of any animal in the classroom.

Persons bringing animals into the school should receive prior permission from the teacher and the principal.

- A. Teachers are to check with the school nurse regarding any known allergies existing among students in the classroom, prior to granting permission. If allergies exist parents must be contacted for further direction;
- B. Teachers must be aware of any existing laws regulating sale, distribution, and handling of animals;
- C. Animals are not to be transported on a school bus;
- D. All experiments using live animals must have prior approval of the principal in accord with existing law;
- E. If an animal has bitten a staff member or student where skin has been pierced, the teacher must report the incident immediately to the school office:
 - 1. The principal assumes all responsibility to:
 - a. Notify public health authorities; and
 - b. Impound the animal for observation.

2. Public health authorities will determine the appropriate term of confinement of the animal and method of observation.

Injury to Persons

The following steps will be followed in the event a student, staff member, or visitor to school is bitten or scratched by an animal in school. The teaching staff member or adult supervisor in charge will:

- A. Take immediate and prudent steps to prevent further injury;
- B. Follow/send the injured person to the school nurse for immediate examination (see policy and procedure 5141.1 Accidents, 5141.2 Injuries); and
- C. Capture (if safe and possible) and impound the animal;
- D. In consultation with the school nurse, contact of Board Health to determine if any further action is required.

Therapy Dogs

The board shall approve all therapy dogs permitted to interact with the students of this district. The owner or organization shall provide proof of insurance and training, health and vaccination records annually.

The parents/guardians and students shall be notified prior to the first visit. This notification shall request that the parent/guardian provide information about pet allergies, fears and anxieties related to dogs, and any other concerns. Appropriate precautions shall be taken when concerns are expressed to protect the student and prevent disruption to the student's educational program.

A signed parent/guardian permission is needed for the student to be involved with the Therapy Dog/Therapy (Reading) Dog.

Handlers/Organizations shall provide annually for each dog/handler:

- Current vaccine records
- Current physical exam records including proof of Heartworm Test and healthy stool samples
- Current insurance policy
- Therapy Dogs and handlers shall be tested and accredited by a reputable authority and approved by the Principal/Superintendent

The following are minimum standards for all Therapy Dogs/Therapy (Reading) Dogs that are approved in the Franklin Township District:

- Must be trained not to void/defecate in inappropriate areas.
- No unnecessary vocalization.
- No signs of aggression towards people or other animals.
- The dog/handler shall be in visible good health and free of any offensive odors. There shall be no signs of ticks/fleas.
- The handler/dog shall not annoy or disturb any education process for staff or students.

The Principal/Superintendent will designate the area where the handler/dog will remain. The handler/dog will have easy/quick access to go outside as needed. (This can follow the areas where 'Service Animals can go'. I saw that we have a policy for 'Service Animals' as I had to reference this recently.)

Criteria but not limited to Exclusion/Removal from Franklin Township School District:

- It is determined that the handler does not have control over the dog.
- The dog urinates/defecates in an inappropriate area.
- The dog shows signs of direct/indirect threat to anyone.
- The presence of the dog interferes with the educational process.

The handler/dog will leave Franklin Township School District property immediately when instructed by a school administrator. There will be a report made to the organization that provided the certification/license for the handler/dog.

The Franklin Township School District supports the implementation of a pilot program for Therapy Dogs in the school for the social and emotional benefit of the students and staff. The benefits that Therapy Dogs bring include and are not limited to stress reduction, improved self-esteem and a generalized good feeling that has been shown to increase academics and improve behavior. Therapy Dogs are not the same as "emotional support" or "service animals". Students and staff may engage with the dogs by petting or hugging the dogs, speaking to the dogs, reading to the dogs, or giving the dogs their trained commands to get a response.

The pilot program will begin with the 2020-2021 school year and will be reviewed throughout the school year to determine if the program shall continue for the following school year. The policy can be revised.

THERAPY (READING) DOGS

The Franklin Township School District allows Therapy (Reading) Dogs and their handlers to visit our school on occasion. The Principal/Superintendent shall provide approval for the use of occasional Therapy (Reading) Dogs according to the same criteria as stated above for the Therapy Dogs.

Board Approved: 4/27/20

Key Words

Animals, Animals in the Classroom

Possible

Cross References:

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| *5141 | Student health |
| *5141.1 | Accidents |
| *5141.2 | Illness |
| *5141.21 | Administration of medication |
| *5142 | Pupil Safety |
| 6000 | Concepts and roles in instruction |
| *6010 | Goals and objectives |
| *6140 | Curriculum adoption |
| *6142 | Subject fields |
| *6145 | Extracurricular activities |

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.