

Instruction

Animals in Schools and Buildings

The Snohomish School District is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all students and staff. It is the policy of the Snohomish School District to only allow the following animals inside District schools and buildings or on District property :

1. Service animals;
2. Therapy Animals; and
3. Animals used as part of an instructional program.

1. Service Animals

- A. Students and/or adults with disabilities may be accompanied by a “service animal” as required by federal laws and state laws. This policy governs the presence of service animals in schools, on school property, including school buses and at school activities.

A “service animal” means any dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by the service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability.

- B. The crime deterrent effects of an animal’s presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks.
- C. It is a civil infraction to misrepresent an animal as a service animal.

2. Therapy Dogs/Cats

- A. The use of therapy dogs (or cats under specific circumstances) is a goal driven, instructional intervention or activity with an articulated purpose and may also reduce human stress and anxiety that is directed and delivered by a certificated therapy animal handler. The handler’s responsibility will be the care of the animal and fulfilling the purpose for which they are on campus. The therapy animal should not interfere with the handler’s ability to fulfill district responsibilities. Therapy animals must be certified by an agency listed in the procedures 2030P.

3. Animals used in Instructional programs

- A. Requests to include animals in the instructional program of the classroom or school will be approved by the principal and CTE Director. Health issues (allergies, vaccinated status of the animal, indoor air quality concerns) involving students and staff will be addressed before permission is granted to allow the animal in school. Students will be given an opportunity to opt out of the activity without disruption of their learning.
- B. If the instructional program involving the animal is ongoing and the animal will remain at school when school is not in session (evenings), the classroom teacher will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of animal care. Animals may not be left at school unattended over weekends or school breaks (the exception to this will be fish and insects).
- C. Animals which are unacceptable for schools include, but are not limited to, wild animals, poisonous animals, wolf-hybrids, ducks, aggressive animals bred or trained to demonstrate aggression toward humans, and/or animals that have demonstrated similar aggression in the past.
- D. Only animals (mammals, birds, butterflies, fish and reptiles) bred in captivity will be allowed on school property (after principal approval) due to the wide variety of diseases carried by wild animals.
- E. Students are not allowed to touch or have physical contact with any animals in the classroom without having a hold-harmless liability waiver on file signed by a legal guardian. This waiver must be sent to risk management at the district office. Animals that are part of the instructional program will be under the control of their adult owner or the teacher at all times.
- F. Animals will not be transported in a district owned vehicle.

Any animal may be restricted from District property should the animal become aggressive or a nuisance, including service, therapy dogs/cats and animals used for instructional programs.

The Superintendent will develop procedures to implement the policy.

Legal Reference: WAC 246-366A-080 (Effective July 1, 2011)

Classification: Encouraged

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