

ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS

The Brunswick School Board recognizes that having animals in our school facilities can offer valuable student learning experiences but is also concerned with the health and safety of students, staff and visitors and the humane treatment of animals when they are brought to school. For the purpose of this policy “animals” includes mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, insects, and fish.

The presence of live animals in any Brunswick School Department facility must be directly related to the objectives of the instructional program. Permission must be obtained from the building administrator before any animal is brought into the school by a teacher, student or any other person.

The Brunswick School Board also recognizes that service animals may be used to assist persons with disabilities. This policy does not apply to the presence of service animals that have been or are being specifically trained for the purpose of assisting a person with a disability.

The following guidelines shall apply to the presence of animals in any Brunswick School Department facility:

- A. The presence of animals in any Brunswick School Department facility must be directly related to the instructional program. Staff who wish to have animals in our facilities must submit a written request to the building administrator; the request should include the instructional purpose and activity, the type of animal, the length of time the animal is expected to be present, and a plan for the care of the animal. The administrator, at his/her discretion, may approve or deny any request.
- B. Students or parents who wish to bring animals to school for educational purposes must consult with the teacher who, in turn, will provide a written request for permission from the building administrator. All other persons who wish to bring animals to school must obtain written permission, in advance, from the building administrator.
- C. The Superintendent will be responsible for developing procedures to inform parents that animals may be visiting or residing in classrooms or in other Brunswick School Department facilities during the school year. Parents are expected to notify the school if their child has an allergy or other health condition that will be affected by the presence of animals. ***Parents will also be given the opportunity for their child to “opt out” of any animal related duties.*** The building administrator and staff will respond appropriately when health considerations are brought to their attention. No animal shall be permitted in a classroom if a student in that classroom has a documented allergy to animals.

- D. Animals may not be transported in school vehicles.
- E. No domestic mammals/pets (including dogs, cats, ferrets, and primates) or livestock will be allowed in school facilities unless current proof of rabies and/or other vaccination is provided. Smaller mammals such as mice, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, and rabbits do not need to be vaccinated against rabies. Bats, as they may be carriers of rabies, are not allowed in any school facility.

Parrots, parakeets and other psittacine birds (birds that may carry psittacosis, a severe infectious human respiratory disease) shall not be brought to school unless they have been tested and certified as psittacosis-free.

Red-eared turtles (also known as painted turtles) are carriers of salmonella and shall not be kept in the classroom without written documentation from the supplier that they are salmonella-free.

- F. No wild, exotic, aggressive or poisonous animals will be allowed in school unless under the control of an individual trained in the care and management of the animal and properly licensed by state or federal agencies as appropriate (e.g., zookeepers, veterinarians, biologists, Maine Fish and Wildlife personnel). Students will not be permitted to handle such animals.
- G. No animals will be allowed free range of the classroom or the school facility. All animals brought to school must be restrained by the owner/handler. The teacher is responsible for the proper supervision and control of students whenever there is an exhibit or activity involving animals in school.
- H. Animals kept in classrooms must be housed in suitable cages or containers and fed and otherwise cared for appropriately. Only the teacher or students designated or supervised by the teacher may be allowed to handle these animals. Animal waste must be removed on an as-needed basis and in a sanitary manner.

- I. If any student, staff member or visitor is bitten/injured by an animal on school premises, the building administrator, school nurse and parent/guardian (if the person bitten/injured is a student) must be notified as soon as possible. The building administrator must notify appropriate public health authorities and the Maine Department of Health and Human Services Center for Disease Control of each incident. An accident/injury report must also be completed and forwarded to the Superintendent.

- J. If a stray or wild animal appears on school grounds, students shall not be allowed in the area until the animal has left the premises or is removed by the local animal control officer, game warden or other appropriate official.

- K. No animal may be used as part of a scientific experiment or for any other purpose in which the normal health of the animal is interfered with or which causes pain or distress. No person may practice vivisection or exhibit a vivisected animal in the schools. Dissection of dead animals shall be confined to the classroom and to the presence of students engaged in the study of dissection and shall not be for the purpose of exhibition.

*Legal Reference: Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.)
7 MRSA § 3971
22 MRSA §§ 801-825*

*Cross Reference: EBBB - Accident Reports
IMGA - Service Animals in the Schools
JLCE - First Aid and Emergency Medical Care*

Adopted: 8/14/13