

603.1 Animals in Schools

Policy

The Board recognizes that the inclusion of animals in schools is an opportunity for significant experiences that enhance learning. The Board believes that the inclusion of animals must take into consideration the health and safety of students, staff, and animals.

Regulations

1. With the approval of the principal, animals are allowed into the school only for instructional purposes.
2. Instructional purposes for the presence of animals in schools may include:
 - 2.1. as subjects for observation and data gathering on body characteristics, habits, movement, feeding behaviours, instinctive reactions;
 - 2.2. talking and writing stories about animals to support language development;
 - 2.3. supporting the development and learning of a sense of responsibility, kindness and concern for other living beings;
 - 2.4. supporting the development and learning of respect for the animals in our local environment; and
 - 2.5. other instructional purposes as approved by the principal.
3. Prior to introducing an animal into a classroom, the teacher must ensure that the following conditions have been met:
 - 3.1. students and school personnel who will be in contact with the animal must not be allergic to, nor afraid of, that type of animal;
 - 3.2. animals must be believed to be in good health, free of disease and have no known history of aggressive behaviour;
 - 3.3. where appropriate, the owner of the animal must show proof of current vaccinations and licensing;
 - 3.4. Parents/guardians of the population impacted must be informed.
4. Animals must be leashed, if possible.
5. Animals must be under the control of a responsible adult.
6. Animals are not permitted to roam freely in the school building or on the school grounds.
7. Only small animals which are easily confined, caged, maintained, and/or handled may be kept in the classroom.

8. Larger animals such as dogs and cats may not be unattended in the school building beyond regular school hours.
9. Withdrawal of an animal can be made at the discretion of the principal.
10. Accredited service dogs are permitted to accompany a student during regular school hours and activities providing they have met the requirements outlined in Policy 605.6 Service Dogs.
11. The following are not permitted in schools:
 - 11.1. unescorted animals;
 - 11.2. venomous animals;
 - 11.3. indigenous wild animals; and
 - 11.4. rats.
12. The teacher must ensure:
 - 12.1. the ethical and humane treatment of animals is maintained and modeled; and
 - 12.2. any animal that is kept in the classroom receives adequate care and is not abused nor neglected in any way.
13. The teacher is responsible for:
 - 13.1. determining the care and feeding requirements for animals kept in the classroom;
 - 13.2. ensuring appropriate standards of hygiene and sanitation will be met;
 - 13.3. ensuring that animal care procedures are understood by the students; and
 - 13.4. cleaning up after the animal.
14. The teacher must ensure that there is a plan in place to provide care to animals:
 - 14.1. after school hours, including weekends and holidays; and
 - 14.2. in a permanent home when classroom study is completed.
15. In the event of the death of an animal kept in the classroom, the animal must be disposed of safely and in a manner that is sensitive to student emotions and in accordance with current legislation.
16. Dogs are not permitted on school grounds in accordance with the City of Lethbridge bylaw with the exception of accredited Service Dogs accompanying an individual on school property.

References

- Statutes: School Act R.S.A. 2000, c. S-3, section 45(8); City of Lethbridge Bylaw 5956 (20)(b); Service Dogs Act SA 2007, C.S-7.5; Wildlife Act of Alberta
- Division Policies: 605.6 Service Dogs