

ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM

Background

The High Prairie School Division (HPSD) believes that students require an understanding of animal life and life processes and recognizes the value of active learning processes in developing these concepts. HPSD also recognizes the importance of students developing the concepts of dignity of life and respect for all living things and consequently requires that all animal life used in the classroom be treated in a humane and purposeful manner.

Procedures

1. Live Animals in the Classroom

- 1.1. Venomous or toxin producing spiders, insects, reptiles or amphibians are not permitted.
- 1.2. Approval by the Principal is required prior to the use of live animals in the classroom.
- 1.3. The teacher shall provide a written proposal and risk assessment for the use and maintenance of live animals in the classroom that addresses:
 - 1.3.1. the appropriateness to curriculum;
 - 1.3.2. the effect of the animals upon the students from a health and psychological viewpoint;
 - 1.3.3. awareness of potential health hazards, student allergies and phobias and make appropriate adjustments to the presence, use, housing, handling, and routines the animals will go through with the children;
 - 1.3.4. a plan for notification to parents;
 - 1.3.5. the provision of proper animal husbandry as follows:
 - 1.3.5.1. proper housing and space;
 - 1.3.5.2. proper lighting and temperature;
 - 1.3.5.3. adequate ventilation;
 - 1.3.5.4. adequate water and food with proper nutritional requirements;
 - 1.3.5.5. provision for sanitary living conditions including:
 - 1.3.5.5.1. the use of a tray or drop sheet to capture waste materials;
 - 1.3.5.5.2. the use of disposable gloves when cleaning and disposing of waste materials that are to be placed in a sealed separate plastic bag and disposed of immediately in an outside trash bin; and
 - 1.3.6. provision for proper humane disposal of animal remains.
- 1.4. The Principal has the right to request the removal of any animal at any time for any reason.
- 1.5. Animals shall not be left on site during extended breaks or holidays as this can interfere with custodial and maintenance activities.
- 1.6. The teacher must provide adequate supervision of students and animals to prevent harm to either.
- 1.7. Handling of animals should be restricted to those individuals knowledgeable in proper handling technique. These techniques include but are not limited to:
 - 1.7.1. The use of disposable gloves is required.
 - 1.7.2. Thorough hand washing techniques must be taught and followed before and after each time an animal or associated equipment is handled.
 - 1.7.3. Persons with open cuts or sores shall not handle animals.
 - 1.7.4. Students will be instructed to keep their faces away from an animal's mouth, beak or claws.
 - 1.7.5. If a person is scratched or bitten the wounds shall be immediately washed with soap and water.
 - 1.7.6. Students will handle animals and assist with cleaning only under the direct supervision of the teacher.
 - 1.7.7. The teacher must ensure that students are instructed on how to behave around the animal (such as not provoking the animal, etc.).
- 1.8. The teacher shall ensure that no wild animals be brought into the classroom.
- 1.9. The teacher must monitor the animals' general health and behaviour and provide needed medical services or humane disposal as needed.
- 1.10. The teacher shall ensure that the animal receives proper care and housing after its school use or administer proper euthanasia as outlined by Canadian Council on Animal Care.

2. Live Animals in Experimentation

- 2.1. Approval by the Principal is required prior to the use of live animals in experimentation.
- 2.2. The teacher shall provide a written proposal to the Principal for the use of live animals in experimentation that addresses:
 - 2.2.1. the appropriateness to curriculum;
 - 2.2.2. the effect of the animals upon the students from a health and psychological viewpoint. The teacher must be aware of potential health hazards, student allergies and phobias and make appropriate adjustments to the presence, use, housing, handling, and routines the animals will go through with the students; and
 - 2.2.3. the provision of proper animal husbandry.
- 2.3. Lower orders of organisms such as bacteria, fungi, protozoa and insects can reveal basic biological information; therefore, if experiments are to be conducted on living subjects, only lower orders of life should be used.
- 2.4. Vertebrate animals are not to be used in any active experiments that may be deleterious to the health or physical integrity of the animal. This would only allow observation of living patterns and behavioural experiments with vertebrates.
- 2.5. Behavioural experiments must include only positive reinforcement.
- 2.6. Students shall not be allowed to take animals home to carry out investigations. Investigations must be carried out in the classroom and be monitored by the teacher.
- 2.7. Experiments shall not include the use of:
 - 2.7.1. surgical procedures;
 - 2.7.2. micro-organisms which can cause disease in man and animals;
 - 2.7.3. ionizing radiation or cancer producing agents;
 - 2.7.4. alcohol in any form;
 - 2.7.5. drugs at toxic levels or drugs that may produce pain or adverse reactions, side effects or capable of producing birth defects;
 - 2.7.6. electric shock, exercise until exhaustion, or other distressing stimuli; or
 - 2.7.7. anesthetic agents by students.
- 2.8. Proper animal husbandry must be provided.
- 2.9. Live animal experimentation shall be a student option and will not be a requirement of any course.
- 2.10. The teacher shall ensure that the animal receives proper care and housing after its school use or administer proper euthanasia as outlined by Canadian Council on Animal Care.

3. Animal Dissection

- 3.1. Animal dissections are deemed to be an integral part of some courses in the science curriculum thus each student will be provided the opportunity to participate in animal dissection as the curriculum specifies.
- 3.2. Students with phobias, physical disabilities or a parental request for exclusion will not be required to participate in animal dissection and this will not be detrimental to their science evaluation.
- 3.3. Dissection specimens will only be those obtained from a science supply house or an individual with the legal rights to hunt and or trap.
- 3.4. The teacher shall ensure that the dissection process considers the development of proper dissection technique and meets appropriate health and sanitation requirements.
- 3.5. Following animal dissections, all remaining specimen's material shall receive appropriate disposal (e.g., sealed in plastic bags and placed in separate waste containers designated for that purpose).

References

Education Act, Sections 53, 196, 197, 222
Alberta Human Rights Act

Cross References

Administrative Procedure 109 - Animals Supporting Inclusion