GUIDELINES FOR VISITING AND RESIDENT ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS

The Hudson City School District recognizes that animals are effective and valuable teaching aids but safeguards are required to reduce the risk for infection, injury, and the maintenance of indoor environmental quality. The school district has established the following procedure to regulate the handling and keeping of animals in the school facility.

General Guidelines

- Wash hands after contact with animals, animal products, or their environment. Hands should be washed with soap and warm water, if available, for 20 seconds.
- Supervise human-animal contact, particularly for elementary school aged children.
- The New York State Education Department has guidelines and requirements for the humane treatment of animals and creates prohibitions against the injury or killing of vertebrate animals as part of the educational process. Check with the Laboratory Chemical Hygiene Officer for specific requirements.
- Display animals in enclosed cages or under appropriate restraint (i.e. collars, harnesses, or tethers).
- Designate areas for animal contact.
- Do not allow animals to roam, fly free, or have contact with wild animals.
- Do not allow animals in areas where food or drink are consumed.
- Clean and disinfect all areas where animals have been present. This task should not be performed by Elementary School children. Middle School and High School children years should only perform this task while supervised by an adult, ideally when Elementary School children are not present.
- Obtain appropriate veterinary care, a certificate of veterinary inspection, and/or proof of rabies vaccination for visiting animals according to local or state requirements.
- Keep animals clean and free of intestinal parasites, fleas, ticks, mites, and lice.
- Consult with parents to determine special considerations needed for children who are immunocompromised, who have allergies, or who have asthma.

Animal-Specific Guidelines

The following animals may be maintained in classrooms with specific authorization from the building administrator. The general guidelines must be followed, and a high level of cleanliness maintained at all times.

- Fish – Use disposable gloves when cleaning aquariums, and do not dispose of aquarium water in sinks used for food preparation or for obtaining drinking water.
- Non-psittacine birds – See General Guidelines.
- Small rodents, i.e. mice – See General Guidelines.
- Baby chicks and ducks – See General Guidelines.

- Reptiles (including turtles, lizards, and non-venomous snakes) and amphibians – To prevent *Salmonella* infection, children aged < 5 years should not have contact with reptiles and amphibians.

***Animals That May Not Be Maintained in the Hudson City School District**

- Psittacine birds (e.g., parrots, parakeets, and cockatiels).
- Dogs, cats, rabbits and other fur-bearing, dander-producing animals.
- Ferrets.
- Farm animals – See General Guidelines. Certain animals (e.g., young ruminants and young poultry) excrete *E. coli* O157:H7, *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, and *Cryptosporidium* intermittently and in substantial numbers; therefore, meticulous attention to personal hygiene is essential or these animals might not be appropriate in some settings (e.g., particularly for children aged < 5 years).

****Animals That May Not Be Introduced to School Property**

- Wild or exotic animals (e.g., lions, tigers, ocelots, and bears).
- Non-human primates (e.g., monkeys and apes).
- Mammals at higher risk for transmitting rabies (e.g., bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes, and coyotes).
- Wolf-dog hybrids.
- Aggressive or unpredictable animals, wild or domestic.
- Stray animals with unknown health and vaccination history.
- Venomous or toxin-producing spiders, insects, reptiles, and amphibians.

*Animals may be permitted if they are required for curriculum, or as visitors after review and approval by the building administrator, Safety and Health Designee and Superintendent.

**In order to protect the safety of staff and students, these categories of animal may not be brought onto school property with specific authorization from the Superintendent of Schools and/or Board of Education.

This procedure does not apply to animals that are permitted on school grounds as a matter of law, i.e. seeing-eye dogs, or animal companions designated under individual education plans.

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