

Animals on School Property

The purpose of these procedures is to provide information that will promote safety for instructors and students when animals are brought into the classroom. Many times, inadequate understanding of animal disease and behavior can lead to unnecessary risks for children, teachers, and animals alike. These guidelines are designed to promote a better understanding of:

1. Types of animals appropriate to bring into a school setting.
2. Safety precautions necessary to prevent the transmission of disease.
3. Precautions necessary to ensure the safety of animals and people.
4. Sanitary practices necessary to ensure the health of animals and people.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ANIMALS PERMITTED TO VISIT SCHOOLS:

It is important that animals brought into schools be clean and healthy so that the risk of their transmitting diseases to students is minimal. Animals brought to school should be clean and free of external parasites such as fleas, ticks, and mites. Animals considered as appropriate for school visits include: domestic dog, domestic cat, domestic ferret, domestic ungulate (e.g. cow, sheep, goat, pig, horse), pet rabbit, pet rodent (e.g. mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, chinchillas).

Verified Rabies Vaccination: A current rabies vaccination is required for all dogs, cats and ferrets being brought to the school.

Proper Restraints of Animals: Because animals may react strangely to classroom situations, it is important to have an effective way to control them.

Collars and Leashes: All dogs, cats, and ferrets should be wearing a proper collar, harness, and/or leash when on school grounds. The owner or person responsible for the animal should be able to restrain the animal at all times during the visit. No animal should be allowed to roam unrestrained in the school.

STUDENT CONTACT WITH ANIMALS

Even very tame animals may react aggressively in strange situations; therefore, student contact with animals should be regulated by a few basic rules.

- Because increased activity and sudden movements can make animals feel threatened, ALL student contact with animals should be organized and properly administered.

- Animal bites can usually be avoided if students are kept in small groups. If an accidental bite does happen, the County Health Department should be contacted.
- Rough play or teasing should not be allowed in the vicinity of the animal.
- Small animals such as rabbits, hamsters, gerbils, and mice should be handled with leather gloves whenever possible.
- Students should avoid “kissing” animals or having close contact with their faces. This statement is especially true for reptiles and amphibians.
- Students should wash their hands immediately after handling animals.
- Animals should not be placed in sinks or in any area where food is prepared, stored, or served. Dogs or cats should be kept away from sandboxes where children play.
- Immunocompromised students and/or students with severe allergies may be especially susceptible to diseases and reactions. Therefore, the student may need to take special precautions to minimize the risk. Alternative classroom experiences may be substituted.
- Fish – use disposable gloves when cleaning aquariums. Used tank water should be disposed of in sinks that are not used for food preparation or for obtaining water for human consumption.
- Field Trips – While on field trips, disposable wipes/hand sanitizer should be used after handling/petting animals. Children should use soap and running water as soon as it is available.
- Teachers are responsible for all animals within their classrooms. Visiting animals should be restricted to an area designated by the teacher. Teachers should take care to clean area that animals have occupied and encourage children to wash their hands well each time after handling any animal.

HANDLING AND DISPOSAL OF ANIMAL WASTE

Children should not be allowed to handle or clean up animal waste without proper cleaning supplies and training. Animal waste should be disposed of where children cannot come in contact with it, such as in a plastic bag or container with a lid or via the sewage system. Food handlers should not be involved in the cleanup of animal waste.

HUMANE TREATMENT OF THE ANIMALS

There should be no intentional or unintentional abuse, mistreatment or neglect of animals.

Lester Prairie School District

Animal Visiting Form

Your child has indicated that you are able to bring your family pet/animal to share with our class. We look forward to it. We will be expecting you at the following date and time:

Date: _____

Time: _____

Teacher: _____

Please complete the following form and return it to school at least one day prior to the visit:

Student's Name: _____

Type of Animal: _____

The following criteria must be completed before the animal is allowed to visit.

_____ Pet will be on a leash or in a cage or kennel.

_____ Pet is up-to-date on all vaccinations.

_____ Date of most recent rabies vaccinations.

_____ Name of veterinarian that administered vaccinations.

_____ An adult must bring the pet to school and take responsibility for the actions of the pet.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Signature of Building Principal