

## ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOLS

It is the intent of RSU 19 to provide a healthy learning environment for all students. The RSU recognizes that animals have been part of the learning experience at school for many years and they have beneficial and therapeutic effects for some students including acceptance, bonding, caring, and teaching of responsibility. However, for students with asthma, animals can trigger a respiratory reaction that in some cases can be severe. Other potential consequences include allergic reactions, scratches and bites, infections, and infestations.

In an effort to provide a safe environment for all students, the following applies: *(This does not apply to service animals.)*

1. The most effective method of controlling student exposure to animal allergens is to keep the school free of feathered or furred animals.
2. Before any animal (mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, and insects) is allowed in school, permission must be obtained from the principal.
3. No animals, for which vaccine is recommended, will be allowed on school premises without proof of current rabies vaccination. Students are encouraged not to handle wild animals.
4. All animals must be restrained and preferably caged. Keeping animals in the classrooms as pets is prohibited. (Fish in tanks may be an exception if there is an appropriate plan for their care.) If the animal remains in the classroom, the animal must remain caged in a localized area away from the ventilation system and away from students with known allergies to animals or with asthma. The cage must be frequently and thoroughly cleaned. The entire building must also be thoroughly cleaned as animal allergens readily migrate to other areas of the building.
5. Animals should be kept away from upholstered furniture, carpets, and stuffed toys.
6. If a student is bitten/injured by an animal on school premises, the principal, school nurse, and parent/guardian must be notified as soon as possible. If a visitor or staff is bitten, the principal must be notified. A report must be made as applicable to the Maine Bureau of Health.
7. Reptiles are a source of salmonella and hand washing after exposure is mandatory.
8. If a stray or wild animal appears on school grounds, students should be kept away from the area until the animal leaves the area or is removed by a local animal control officer, game warden or other appropriate official.
9. No live vertebrate, except eggs, may be used in Pre-Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade as part of a scientific experiment or for any other purpose in which the animal is experimentally medicated or drugged in a manner to cause painful reactions or to induce painful or lethal pathological conditions, or in which the animal is injured through any other type of treatment, experiment or procedure, including, but not limited to, anesthetization or electric shock or where the normal health of the animal is interfered with or where pain or distress is caused.

10. No person may, in the presence of any student in Pre-Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, practice vivisection or exhibit a vivisected animal. Dissection of dead animals or any portions of dead animals in school shall be confined to the classroom and to the presence of students engaged in the study of dissection and in the taxidermy program.
11. Animals used for dissection must be obtained through appropriate sources.