

Guidelines for Animals in School and Childcare Settings

Animals used as teaching aids need to be managed properly to reduce the risk of infection and injury to children.

General Guidelines for School Settings

- Wash hands after contact with animals, animal products, their cages, or sleeping areas.
- Always supervise child-animal interactions. Especially children under age 6.
- Always treat animals humanely.
- Display animals in enclosed cages or under appropriate restraint.
- Have specific areas for animal contact that are easily cleaned and sanitized.
- Never allow animals to roam free or birds to fly free.
- Do not allow animals in areas where food and drink are consumed.
- The care giver should clean and sanitized all areas where animals have been.
- All animals should be up to date with all shots and veterinary physicals
- Keep all animals clean and free of intestinal parasites, fleas, ticks, mites, and lice.
- Always inform all students and staff of new and visiting animals to check for any asthma or allergic reactions



Animal Specific Guidelines

- **Fish aquariums** should be cleaned using disposable gloves. Do not dispose of aquarium water in sinks used for food preparation or drinking water.
- **Psittacine birds** (parrots, parakeets, and cockatiels) may have psittacosis and should not be handled by children. Children should not clean bird cages.
- **Non-psittacine birds** (diamond doves, canaries, finches, mynahs) are allowed but handling and cleaning should be closely supervised.
- **Domestic dogs and cats** should come with a copy of current rabies vaccination and vet check-up.
- **Pocket pets** (hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, rabbits, chinchillas) should be housed in a non-absorbent and easily cleaned pen. Waste should be cleaned frequently.
- **Baby chicks and ducks** should not be handled by children to prevent the spread of Salmonella or Campylobacter.
- **Reptiles** (turtles, lizards, nonvenomous snakes) and amphibians should not be handled by children to prevent the spread of Salmonella.
- **Large animals** should be 50 feet from food prep area and their cages should be cleaned daily. Adequate fly and mosquito control should be utilized.

Animals Not Allowed in Child Care Settings

Psittacine birds (parrots, parakeets, and cockatiels), ferrets, primates (monkeys & apes), poisonous reptiles, poisonous fish, poisonous amphibians, snakes > 6 feet, aggressive animals and fish, wild or exotic animals (lions, tigers, ocelots, and bears).

Animals Not Recommended for a School Setting

Those mentioned above and mammals at higher risk for transmitting rabies (bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes, & coyotes), wolf-dog hybrids, aggressive or unpredictable animals, stray animals with unknown health conditions and vaccination histories, venomous or toxin-producing spiders, insects, reptiles, and amphibians.