

ANIMALS ON SCHOOL PREMISES

The Board of Education recognizes that animals can be a great asset in a school building when teaching life sciences, respect for living things and fostering responsibility, promoting social and emotional well-being, and supporting academic skills. The Board of Education also recognizes there are risks that have to be considered to protect the health and safety of students and staff. To that end, live animals shall be allowed on school premises only in accordance with established procedures.

No live animal, except a service animal, shall be brought onto Rice Lake Area School District property without first having obtained permission from the building principal or designee. In the case of an emotional support animal, or therapy dog, the parent/guardian first obtains permission from the Director of Pupil Services or the building principal per Rice Lake Area School District policy 383.2/383.3. Sanitation and exposure to infectious materials on classroom surfaces or through animal handling shall be controlled to minimize exposure to illness and disease.

Based on the recommendation of the Wisconsin Humane Society, only healthy animals may be brought to a school. Responsible adults must supervise the animal and minimize the handling of those animals by all students, particularly by younger students. Improper handling is unfair to the animal and may cause injuries to the student, staff or the animal.

The practice of keeping animals in the classroom should be carefully considered prior to introducing an animal to any school environment. State statutes do allow for trained and certified service animals supporting individuals with disabilities and/or law enforcement. The potential for adverse effects from animals however, such as allergic reactions, scratches and/or bites, asthmatic reactions, infections and infestations exist. Therefore, schools must take into consideration students and staff with allergies and their special needs when deliberating on bringing an animal into that environment. Attention to the potential for these adverse reactions is a necessary safeguard for the health, safety and welfare of students, staff and the animals involved. The building principal will make the final decision as to whether or not an animal may be allowed on school premises.

Legal Ref: 106.52; 118.07(4); 121.02(1)(i); 252.21; 254.56 WSS; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act; Title II Regulations; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Cross Ref: 383.1 Service Animals in District Facilities

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