



BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

403 – Non-Service Animals in Schools

DIRECTIONAL POLICY

400 – Safe, Inclusive & Protective Schools

Title of Administrative Procedure:

Non-Service Animals in Schools

Date Approved:

February 2024

Projected Review Date:

February 2024

Directional Policy Alignment:

This Administrative Procedure aligns with the Safe, Inclusive & Protective Schools Directional Policy. The purpose of this policy is to provide a healthy, safe, inclusive, accepting, and secure learning environment for students and staff. The Board recognizes, like St. Francis, an appreciation for all living creatures in the communion that exists between all of God's Creation (Laudato Si). In the context of this landscape, the Board will provide a learning environment which supports and enables diversity within its Catholic community. The Board recognizes that Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices, shared and committed leadership, engaged school-home-community relationships, inclusive curriculum and assessment practices, provision of religious accommodations, a positive school climate, professional learning, accountability, and transparency, are key to establishing and maintaining an equitable and inclusive learning environment.

Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan:

The Non-Service Animals in Schools Administrative Procedure supports the Board's commitment to the learning of all students and provides a range of differentiated placements, programs, and interventions to support student success. This Administrative Procedure supports the four tenets of believing, protecting, learning, and nurturing. The Board is committed to the safety and well-being of our students and will ensure that Board employees are aware of this Administrative Procedure.

[CDSBEO Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#)

Purpose

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario recognizes that animals have educational value in the school setting, but only under conditions that ensure the safety and well-being of the students, staff, and animals. The Board recognizes that living animals in the classroom can be an effective source of learning and curricular enrichment that can help carry out appropriate educational objectives and contribute to a positive classroom culture. All visiting animals permitted in the classroom will be treated humanely and cared for in a manner that demonstrates respect for living things. It is expected that staff will follow the procedures herein when requesting a visiting animal and take into consideration the health and safety of students, staff, and animals.

Action Required

Resident Animals are not permitted in schools.

Animals that are unacceptable as visiting animals include:

Stray Animals

Baby Chicks or Ducks

All types of Birds

Poisonous Animals (e.g., spiders, insects, snakes, etc.)

Reptiles and Amphibians

Wild Animals: For the purpose of this policy, a wild animal is any mammal that is not one of the following:

- Domestic cat or dog
- Pet rabbit
- Pet rodent (e.g., mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs)
- Fish or tadpoles in a contained aquarium.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Ensuring alignment of this Administrative Procedure with the Safe, Inclusive & Protective Schools Directional Policy.
- Reviewing the "Non-Service Animals in Schools" Administrative Procedure as part of its regular Policy and Procedures review cycle.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- Designating resources for ensuring the implementation of and compliance with this Administrative Procedure.

Superintendents of School Effectiveness are responsible for:

- Providing input to ensure this Administrative Procedure captures the specific and relevant concerns that may arise from their family of schools and their particular portfolios.

Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for:

- Prior to introducing a visiting animal to a classroom or other area within the school, the Principal/Vice-Principal will inform parent(s)/guardian(s) about the proposed animal. Such communication will include the educational purpose for the animal and any activities that will involve the animal. See **Appendix B** for a sample letter to parent(s)/guardian(s) regarding a proposed animal.
- The Principal/Vice-Principal will obtain written consent from parent(s)/guardian(s) for all visiting animals in schools, with one exception. Written consent is not required for animals kept in a fully enclosed terrarium or aquarium in areas of a school other than a classroom.
- Inquiries may need to be made regarding competing rights and transportation arrangements.

Staff are responsible for:

- An educator must have approval from the principal before an animal is permitted in the classroom. Educators will complete the "Request for Animal(s) in the Classroom" form, see **Appendix A**, and submit it to their principal for consideration.
- Educators must demonstrate a definite purpose for requesting to have a visiting animal in the classroom which includes corresponding curriculum expectations which must be submitted with the request.
- Educators shall keep in mind that removing animals and insects from their natural environment and bringing them indoors may not be healthy for the animal. The observation of animals in their natural habitat should be considered as a first option.
- Educators requesting a visiting animal for a classroom in a portable need to provide the principal with an accommodation plan for the animal on evenings and weekends in the main school building.
- Communication to parent(s)/guardian(s) and school staff will include inquiring about any students or staff with allergies, asthma, phobias, or religious beliefs that may be affected by the animal's presence in the school.
- The educator and/or principal will notify the larger school community of the animal's presence through a school newsletter, posting on the school website, and/or other forms of communication (e.g., notice on the school and classroom door).

- Any animal introduced into a classroom setting will not be nocturnal (e.g., hamster, gerbil, turtle, etc.). The animal should have a natural sleep schedule that is compatible with the daytime school schedule.
- Domestic animals of unknown origin and wild vertebrate animals must not be brought into the school. This includes but is not limited to squirrels, skunks, and raccoons.
- While student safety is the primary concern of educators, in the event of an emergency, classroom teachers are also responsible for developing and communicating an emergency management plan to ensure the safety and welfare of all animals in their classroom, where possible (i.e., some animals may not be able to be removed in an emergency situation).

Definitions

Visiting Animal: A visiting animal is an animal that the teacher brings into the classroom or other area within the school for a short period of time or on a temporary basis as part of a unit of study linked to the Ontario Curriculum.

Resident Animal: A resident animal is an animal that a teacher brings in to stay in the classroom or other area within the school (e.g., class pet) for more than two days.

Wild Animals: For the purpose of this policy, a wild animal is any mammal that is not one of the following:

- Domestic cat or dog
- Pet rabbit
- Pet rodent (e.g., mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs)
- Fish or tadpoles in a contained aquarium.

Related Documents

- Appendix A: [Request for Animal\(s\) in the classroom](#)
- Appendix B: [Sample letter to Parent\(s\)/Guardian\(s\)](#)

References

- [Education Act, RSO 1990, c.E2, s. 170\(1\), s.265\(1\); O. Reg. 298, s.11](#)
- [Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2 \(ontario.ca\)](#)
- [Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.36](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 60/09: Standards of Care and Administrative Standards](#)
- [Laudato Si](#)