

Regulation IMG-R

Las Cruces Public Schools

Related Entries: IMG, JBB, JBB-R
Responsible Office: Associate Superintendent for Instruction

Animals in the Schools

I. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for the care and responsibility for animals in the classroom and guidelines for the use of service animals.

II. PROCESS

Subject to the guidelines below, animals may be brought into the classroom, or on school grounds, only if they serve a direct instructional purpose and if the animal can be cared for in a humane manner.

- A. It is the responsibility of the principal/designee to assure a specific and appropriate educational purpose if any animal is housed in a classroom (Form IMG-E1).
- B. School staff will be responsible for the proper care of animals brought to school for instructional purposes, and the principal will be responsible for insuring the effective protection of students when animals are in the school.
- C. Parents will be notified about animals that are to be housed in the classroom and will give written permission (IMG-E2) for students to handle or care for vertebrates and other animals.
- D. Proper care must be provided for the animals brought into classrooms at all times including weekends and holidays. Animals must have adequate food, water, lighting, humidity, and controlled temperature. If an animal is to be sent home with a student over a weekend or holiday, permission must be obtained from a parent in advance (Form IMG-E3).
- E. Teachers must provide students with proper instructions and safety precautions for handling and feeding live animals to avoid accidental bites to students or trauma to the animal. Students shall not be left alone in the classroom with animals outside their containers.
- F. Students shall not be required to watch a live animal being fed to another animal.
- G. Hands should be washed with antibacterial soap immediately after handling animals.
- H. It will be the responsibility of the principal/designee to provide a plan of care for classroom-housed animals in the event of an emergency school closing

which might cause disruption of the routine care of the animals. In each school where these animals are housed, there should be a plan whereby the staff member who visits the school daily during the emergency closing will be aware of the animals' presence and see to their care.

- I. Special attention should be given to furred and feathered animals in the classroom in terms of their effect on allergic students. Prior to bringing an animal into the classroom, parents and students should be notified of potential exposure to animal allergens.
- J. Pets shall not be brought to school or the classroom, unless approved in advance by the principal.
- K. Experienced speakers, using reasonable precautions, may be allowed to make presentations with their animals.
- L. The following criteria serves as a guide to animals brought into any instructional setting:
 - 1. No child shall be allowed to mistreat an animal
 - 2. If any child is allergic to specific animals present in an instructional setting, the school shall accommodate the child's need to learn in a safe environment.
 - 3. The source and history of any animal brought into the school should be known.
 - 4. Domestic rodents, if entirely cage raised, may be used in schools. This group includes gerbils, guinea pigs, tame mice, tame rabbits, and white rats.
 - 5. Mammals obtained from the wild shall not be brought into schools for any purpose. (Skunks, bats, and raccoons are particularly dangerous because they are frequent carriers of rabies.)
 - 6. Monkeys should not be brought into schools because they can carry human disease (e.g., tuberculosis, infectious hepatitis) and can infect human beings.
 - 7. Turtles shall not be brought into the classroom unless they were previously certified to be free of salmonella infection.
 - 8. Venomous animals are prohibited, unless under the supervision of an expert handler and contained in a solid material cage.
 - 9. Horses, used in conjunction with an approved school program, are permitted on school grounds.
 - 10. Service animals may be used in school environments and for off-campus activities. In order to use service animals, prior approval must be obtained from the principal in accordance with Las Cruces Public Schools Procedures for Service Animals for Students.

11. The Las Cruces Public Schools – Procedures for Service Animals for Students (IMG-E4) establishes guidelines for the use of service animals in schools, school buildings, vehicles and other property. Please consult these procedures as they provide assistance to assist LCPS personnel in handling request for service animals, including directing parents' requests to the proper individuals within LCPS, and advising parents of their rights under the relevant laws.

M. Cage or Appropriate Enclosure

An animal must be humanely treated. When animals, which have met the above criteria, are kept in school, the following procedures must be followed:

1. The size of the cage or enclosure should correspond to the animal's habits and ensure enough space to exercise and have proper ventilation. The teacher, or other responsible adults, is responsible for the cleaning of the cage and enclosure.
2. The cage or enclosure should be free of objects that could cause injury to the animal.
3. The cage or enclosure should be secure in order to prevent escape or unsupervised handling.

N. Feeding and Watering

1. A responsible adult should monitor the feeding of animals.
2. Regardless of the type of food that is fed, it should be fresh. Uneaten food spoils rapidly and should be removed daily from the cage or enclosure.
3. Precautions should be taken to not force feed any animal.
4. The size, type, and location of the water container should be carefully considered. A sufficient, fresh supply of water should be available at all time.

O. Animal Bites

- a. The following Emergency Procedures will be followed when an animal bites a student or staff member at school.
 1. The school nurse will be informed and consulted.
 2. If the school nurse is not available, the Director of Health Services Office will be consulted by telephone.
- b. The nurse or person acting in his/her stead should carry out the following procedures:
 1. Cleanse all wounds thoroughly with soap and water; rinse well; and cover with dry, sterile dressing.

2. Check student's immunization record of last tetanus immunization.
3. Notify student's parent and suggest consultation with a physician regarding treatment and overall circumstances of the incident. Discuss need for tetanus immunization if indicated.
4. Notify the owner of the offending animal regarding the incident and let the owner know that the school is contacting the Animal Control Center.
5. Confine the offending animal for observation until its final disposition by the appropriate authorities.
6. Notify the local Animal Control Center regarding all bites inflicted by animals at school and follow any procedures recommended by Animal Control Center.
7. Fill out an LCPS accident report.



4/16/2019

Approved, Associate Superintendent for Instruction

Date Approved

History: New Procedure, revised 03/26/18, revised 4.16.19