

THE STUDY OF ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOLS

The Board of Education recognizes that the study of living things is essential to effective instruction in the life sciences. The primary goals for demonstrations and investigations involving animals are to achieve an interest in and an understanding of the life processes, to demonstrate biological principles, and to teach proper care and handling of animals. Therefore, the Board requires that any such instructional activities, investigations, and projects be well-planned, adequately supervised, and conducted with a respect for life and an appreciation of the health and safety of both animals and students.

The Board also recognizes that some students have a moral or religious objection to dissection or otherwise harming or destroying animals. In accordance with state law, students shall have the right to opt out of dissection activities, provided the student performs an alternative project approved by the student's teacher. The student's parent, guardian, or person in parental relation must substantiate the objection in writing and provide such to the student's teacher and Building Principal.

At the start of the school year (or the start of the course), teachers of courses that include animal dissection shall give notice to the students in those classes, as well as their parents, guardians, and/or persons in parental relation, of their opt-out rights and responsibilities under the law and this policy. Such notice shall also be included in the student handbook and be available upon request.

Ref: Education Law §809(4)
Responsible Use of Live Animals and Dissection in the Science Classroom, National Science Teachers Association Position Statement, revised March 2008
(www.nsta.org/about/positions/animals.aspx)

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