

KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS
SPECIFICATIONS FOR RESPONSIBLE USE OF ANIMALS
WITHIN THE SCHOOL SETTING

The following specifications are meant to help principals and teachers maintain an appropriate, healthy environment while giving students the opportunity to study animals in the classroom setting.

1. Animals caught in the wild shall not be kept at school. This shall include, but not be limited to, turtles, tortoises, rodents, and rabbits. Injured or ill animals shall not be housed in classrooms. Students should be taught to avoid injured or ill animals at all times.
2. All animals must be housed in appropriate enclosures and shall not be allowed to roam freely within the building. This includes animals considered as school mascots.
3. Asthma and other allergic reactions are always a concern in the classroom. Teachers shall purchase bedding material that is non-allergenic and helps reduce air contamination. Parents shall be notified of all animals being housed in the classroom.
4. Reptiles shall not be kept in any primary level (K-2) classroom.
5. As the risks of serious, symptomatic infection with Salmonellae are greatly increased through direct or indirect contact with any reptile, teachers and students in the following categories shall avoid all contact:
 - A. Infants and children under age 8.
 - B. Anyone with an immunodeficiency disorder.
 - C. Anyone who has had transplant surgery and is on anti-rejection therapy.
 - D. Anyone who is on any drug that suppresses or alters immune function such as chemotherapy.
 - E. Anyone receiving radiation treatment.
 - F. Women who are pregnant (due to risk to the fetus).
 - G. People subject to chronic infections.
 - H. People receiving or who have recently received antibiotic treatment.
6. Reptiles may be kept in an intermediate classroom, but shall not be handled by students.
7. After handling any animal, wash hands immediately with antibacterial soap and hot water. Washing with water only is ineffective in eliminating Salmonellae. Wash thoroughly for at least 30 seconds with an antibacterial soap. Teachers shall instruct children how to properly wash hands after handling any animal, especially reptiles.
8. Keep all animals always from any surfaces where human food is stored, prepared, or served.

9. Do not use student sinks to clean caging materials or accessories.
10. Teachers or student with open cuts or lesions (sores) on their hands must not handle any animal or their caging materials.
11. Animals kept in classrooms must not be handled unless appropriate hand washing and clean-up facilities are available and made accessible to children and staff.
12. Only teachers shall clean animal enclosures and accessories on a regularly scheduled basis. They shall wear rubber gloves and avoid splashes to the face. Safety goggles should be worn.
13. Do not touch food for human consumption after handling any animal or their accessories. Food shall not be consumed in an area where animals are housed.
14. Do not touch dishes, pots, pans, or other utensils used for human food after touching any animal or animal accessory.
15. National Science Teacher Association guidelines for responsible use of animals in the classroom must be adhered to at all times.
16. Select a species of animal that fits the goals of the classroom instruction and one that is easy to maintain and can tolerate the activity level in the classroom. Provide adequate space and an enriched environment for the animal.
17. Keep the animals in a clean, dry environment. Cages shall be cleaned at least once weekly. If multiple animals are kept in a cage, cleaning shall occur more frequently. If you start to smell ammonia, it's past time to clean the cage. Dump the old bedding, wipe the bottom of the cage with mild soapy water, wipe dry and replace bedding, food and water. The teacher shall wear gloves while cleaning cage and bedding.
18. Keep your animals in a warm environment. Maintain temperatures within a constant range (68-72 degrees F). Do not place them in direct sunlight or in drafty areas.
19. Provide adequate water for the animals. If an animal stops drinking, it is often an early sign of illness or injury. Check the water source daily and refill as often as needed, but not less than once weekly.
20. Proper vaccinations must be administered to any animals brought to a Knox County School. Any animal that is injured or becomes ill while being housed in a Knox County School shall be removed from the classroom and shall receive proper medical care.

21. For any animals housed in your classrooms, please complete the accompanying form and send a copy to the science office fax machine at 594-1739. Keep the original copy for your records.

Whether you are housing reptiles, crustaceans, gerbils, or any living organisms, using common sense is important. Washing the surfaces and hands the animals come in contact with must be done. The specifications are established to ensure that Knox County students may be provided experiences with animals in as safe a manner as possible. By following the specifications, students' risk of exposure to bacterium or other contaminants is greatly reduced and the animal's health and safety is protected. For questions or concerns, please contact Knox County Schools Science Department or the Knox County Schools Department of Health Services.

More information on proper care and housing of animals has been developed in cooperation with Knox County Schools Health Services and the UT College of Veterinary Medicine. If you'd like an updated copy, call the Knox County Schools Science Department.

**KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS
ANIMAL IN THE CLASSROOM HOUSING FORM**

Responsible Teacher's Name _____

Grade/subject taught _____

School Name _____

School Phone _____ FAX _____

Type of animal housed (complete one form for each different species)
_____ Number housed _____

When (year) and where was animal obtained?

How do you intend to use the animal in your classroom?

Please review the list of provisions for animals in the classroom below and check off all those that you have followed and have plans in place to provide:

___ suitable enclosure (enough space, sturdy, out of direct sunlight, out of drafts)

___ appropriate food and water supplies and containers

___ appropriate non-allergenic bedding materials

___ enclosure is adequately enriched

___ hand washing station and supplies are accessible to students

___ plans for extended weekends, breaks, and holidays (please indicate below)

Teacher's signature _____ Date _____

Principal's signature _____ Date _____