

AP Appendix 1503 B: Animal in Schools for Curricular Purposes - Request to Introduce a Classroom Animal

1. A full-time classroom-based employee seeking to introduce a classroom animal is required to make a request to the Principal in writing to introduce a classroom animal for curricular purposes. See [Administrative Procedure 1503 Animals in Schools for Curricular Purposes](#), complete the associated form (AP 1503 Appendix B - Request to Introduce a Classroom Animal), and see [Administrative Procedure 1504 Assistance Dogs](#).
2. When requesting to introduce a classroom animal, the employee must consider and meet the following requirements:
 - 2.1. Provide a plan and description of the educational outcomes, student interactions, and duration the animal will be present at the school. This request will only be considered for a maximum of one school year. Permission for classroom pets for longer than one school year must be applied for annually and is at the sole discretion of the Principal.
 - 2.2. Confirmation of ownership of the animal(s) by a full-time staff member working in the room where the animal may be housed.
 - 2.3. Confirm the animal(s) is not listed on the Prohibited Animals list. (Refer to AP 1503 Appendix A - Prohibited Animals for expanded information.)
 - 2.4. Confirm the animal is in good health, free of infection or infestation, and lacks aggression. The Principal may request a current veterinarian's note confirming the animal's health at any time if there is cause to question it.
 - 2.5. Submit a detailed description with which Replacement methods were considered prior to the request, as well as which Reduction and Refinement methods will be employed.
 - 2.6. Provide the species, size, and number of animal(s) being proposed for the classroom.
 - 2.7. Submit plans for the animal's care, veterinary care, and ensure that enclosure size meets the standards for safety, design and location.
 - 2.8. Provide animal care plans to ensure the appropriate care of the animal over school calendar breaks and weekends. Management of care plans is the sole responsibility of the employee owner.
 - 2.9. Affirm that the animal's owner is responsible for all costs associated with procuring the animal(s), related equipment, and veterinary care. Discuss food and supply costs with the Principal as a principal may accept or decline to pay food and supply costs via school funds, in which case, these are also the sole responsibility of the employee owner.

- 2.10. Confirm the animal will be in an enclosure or otherwise will not be free roaming in the classroom.
 - 2.11. Confirm the employee will appropriately manage the clean-up and dispose of all waste and may participate in this and similar case tasks.
 - 2.12. Confirm which, if any students, have known allergies to the animal and describe the strategies being proposed to reduce exposure to such students. Note that students with significant health issues will typically cause the request to be denied.
 - 2.13. Seek in writing permission from and notify parents of students within the classroom, classes, or school (as relevant) of the introduction of a classroom animal. (Important: Parent permission or notifications must not be distributed or completed until after the Principal is provided information on the request and conditionally granted approval). The Principal's final approval of the classroom animal will be contingent on the completion of the parent permission/notification process.
3. Notwithstanding the above, the Principal may deny the employee's request based on the presence of concerns over allergies and allergens, fear, health or safety issues, or logistical issues including space, load on school administration, concerns from parents or other staff, or other issues that may be raised by the presence of the pet(s) in the classroom. Similarly, the Principal may revoke their approval should issues arise after the animal(s) is introduced to the classroom.
4. The following guidance is provided to employees considering applying to introduce a classroom animal:
 - 4.1. A classroom animal is not a disposable commodity, but a long-term commitment by the employee owner who, with permission, temporarily shares their pet(s) with students in the classroom for curricular purposes.
 - 4.2. A classroom animal must not be included in the Appendix 1503 A - Prohibited Animals.
 - 4.3. Appropriate species for classroom animals may include the following domestic animals:
 - 4.3.1. Guinea pigs can be well socialized when handled appropriately and regularly; they require room for exercise and ample housing. Average life expectancy is 5 to 7 years.
 - 4.3.2. Gerbils are sociable and curious but may be difficult for children to handle because of their small size. Typical life expectancy is 2 to 4 years.
 - 4.3.3. Domestic rats are sociable if handled regularly and are very intelligent. Typical life expectancy is 2 to 3 years.

- 4.3.4. Domestic fish are a good choice if a robust freshwater species but are not generally interactive. Typical life expectancy: 5 to 10 years (goldfish).
- 4.3.5. Domestic ant farm (without a queen) can be educational, however, they are not generally interactive. Typical life expectancy of workers is 1-3 years, but with a queen a colony can live up to 30 years.
- 4.4. In addition to animals listed in Administrative Procedure, Appendix 1503 A - Prohibited Animals, animals which are inappropriate, however, are common in classrooms elsewhere may include:
 - 4.4.1. Reptiles require very consistent tank heating which cannot be provided in a classroom. Typical lifespan can be over 30 years.
 - 4.4.2. Anoles (American chameleons) are amphibians which require consistent tank heating and require very delicate handling.
 - 4.4.3. Hamsters are nocturnal and, therefore, naturally sleep through the day and are awake at night. Hamsters are more likely to bite than other small rodents.
 - 4.4.4. Rabbits are generally relatively large for classroom pets and need a large amount of space to provide room to exercise. They are naturally skittish and difficult to pick up. Rabbits require a calm, quiet environment.
 - 4.4.5. Tarantulas are exotic animals which are venomous, do bite, and throw sharp hairs in defense. These spiders are extremely fragile and often die if accidentally dropped on hard surfaces. Typical lifespan is 30 years.
 - 4.4.6. Chinchillas generally need a good amount of cage space to exercise. Contrary to common practices, these animals are naturally very curious and are stressed by being held in a person's grasp/lap. They are also more prone to illness due to fluctuations in temperature and humidity, which can be difficult to control in a classroom.

REQUEST TO INTRODUCE A CLASSROOM ANIMAL

Procedure

1. Only classroom-based staff may have classroom pets and complete this form.
2. Review the Administrative Procedure 1503 and Appendix A - Prohibited Animals in advance.
3. Complete this form and await conditional approval before you:
 - a. Procure or bring any animal to school; and
 - b. Advise students or parents of any plan to introduce a pet.
4. Provide a completed copy of this form to the school Principal or Vice Principal for approval.
5. Await the decision of the Principal or Vice Principal.

Employee Name: _____ Full-time Part-time

Name(s) of animal's legal owner: _____

Species: _____ Size: _____ Number of animals: _____

Proposed location of animal: In my classroom Other: _____

Is the animal prohibited by the District? Yes No

As the owner I acknowledge that I am responsible for the animal(s) care: Agree Disagree

Other: _____

Duration/dates in school (max. one school year): _____

I have read AP 1503 - Animals in Schools & Appendix 1503 A Prohibited Animals Yes

No

Complete and attach to this form:

- The plan for curriculum connection, educational benefits and outcomes, and extent of student interactions with the animal(s).
- Replace, reduce, and refine strategies considered prior to application and intended to be used.
- The detailed animal care plan, including enclosure size, design and location, daily care plan as well as care plans for over breaks and weekends, and any veterinary care (if needed).
- The animal safe handling instruction you have received and will train the students to practice (where appropriate).

In applying to have the above classroom pet(s) I accept responsibility for 1) humane care and treatment of the animal(s), 2) all costs associated with equipment and veterinary care (Note: food and supplies costs may or may not be provided via school funds and are to be determined by the Principal), 3) keeping the animal in its enclosure or under control at all times (not free-roaming),

4) planning for care over breaks in the school calendar, and 5) ensuring appropriate clean-up and disposal of all waste created by the animal(s).

Staff member Signature: _____ Date: _____

Pet Owner Signature: _____ Date: _____

School: _____

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

- Approved Conditionally Approved Denied

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approval period (date to date): _____ to _____

If conditionally approved, the Principal will direct the staff member to communicate with relevant parents to:

- Ensure via parents that all students in the classroom, or who will reasonably have contact with the animal(s), have no allergies or health issues related to the animal(s) presence.
- Seek and receive informed consent from all relevant parents regarding the introduction of the animal(s) prior to its introduction to the school. Sample letter on reverse side.

Requesting a Classroom Animal Instructions

Please gain approval from the Principal in advance of introducing any animal in the classroom. School administrators will use Administrative Procedure 1503 - Animals in Schools for Curricular Purposes as a guide. To apply:

1. Provide a plan with the curriculum connection, educational outcomes, student interactions, and duration the animal will be present at the school (Not to exceed one school year. Permission for classroom pets for longer than one school year must be applied for annually and extension is at the sole discretion of the Principal.)
2. Confirm you are a full-time employee working in the room where the animal may be housed.
3. Confirm the animal is in good health, free of infection or infestation, lacks aggression, and is not listed on the Prohibited Animals list. *Refer to Appendix 1503 A - Prohibited Animals for expanded information.
4. Submit detailed description of which replacement methods were considered prior to the request as well as which reduction and/or refinement methods will be employed.
5. Provide the species, estimated adult size, and number of animals being proposed for the classroom.
6. Submit plans for the animal's care, veterinary care, and enclosure size meets standards, design and location.
7. Provide plans for and the care of the animal over breaks and weekends are made by the owner.
8. Affirm that you are responsible for all costs associated with procuring the animal(s), related equipment, and veterinary care. Discuss food and supply costs with the Principal, as the Principal may accept or decline to pay food and supply costs via school funds.
9. Confirm which, if any students are known to have allergies to the animal and the strategies being proposed to reduce exposure to such students.

10. Confirm the animal will be in an enclosure or otherwise will not be free roaming in the classroom.
11. Confirm the employee will appropriately clean-up and dispose of all waste.
12. Confirm the employee is skilled in the safe handling of the proposed animal(s) and, when capable of instructing students in the safe handling of the animal(s).
13. Provide notification to the parents of all students in the classroom or who will reasonably have contact with the animal(s). (Important: Parent notifications and permissions must not be distributed or sought verbally prior to the Principal's conditional approval of the animal(s)).
14. Confirm via the parents of all students in the classroom, or who will reasonably have contact with the animal(s) that their children have no allergies, safety or health issues related to the animal(s) presence. Addressing any safety or health concerns to the parent's satisfaction is a requirement of approval.

SAMPLE MESSAGE TO PARENTS

Dear parents/guardians,

After discussion with the Principal, I am proposing that our class, (grade), (room #), introduce a classroom animal beginning on (date). Specifically, (name), (species), (size), (number). I am writing to notify you of this proposal as well as asking you to confirm whether or not your child has any health issues or allergies associated with the proposed animal.

The animals will be kept in (specify enclosure/under control in the classroom). The educational goals we hope to achieve in introducing this animal include (list curriculum connection and/or education outcomes).

Student interactions will include: (list types of expected physical interactions).

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have regarding this initiative.

Sincerely,

(Teacher)

PLEASE RETURN

I, _____, have reviewed the above proposal and: *(Select ONE)*
(Parent name)

Y N I provide my consent for this in-class activity.

OR

Y N My child has related health or safety concerns and these must be considered prior to this in- class activity commencing.

Student's Name(s): _____

Health Concerns: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____