



Book	Ogdensburg City School District
Section	4000 Instruction
Title	ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOLS
Code	4850
Status	First Reading
Last Revised	July 22, 2025

(X) Required**() Local****(X) Notice***Study and Care of Live Animals*

Observation and experimentation with living organisms and animals gives students unique perspectives of life processes. Animals and animal materials should be used respectfully and for the purpose of meeting course objectives.

The Board of Education, in recognizing the educational uses of animals in the classroom, requires that permission be obtained from the Building Principal before animals are brought into the school or classrooms. It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that there is an appropriate educational purpose if any animal is housed in a classroom. Animals are not to be transported on school buses with the exception of animals certified to assist persons with disabilities.

It shall be the responsibility of the Principal or his/her designee to develop a plan of care for those animals housed in school in the event of an emergency school closing or in the event the animals remain in the classroom on days when school is not in session.

Dissection of Animals

Any student expressing a moral or religious objection to the performance or witnessing of the dissection of an animal, either wholly or in part, shall be provided the opportunity to undertake and complete an alternative project approved by the student's teacher; provided, however, that such objection is substantiated in writing by the student's parent or legal guardian. An alternate activity clearly related to and of comparable rigor will be assigned in lieu of laboratory dissection. Some examples of alternate activities include the use of computer simulations or research. Students who perform alternative projects shall not be penalized.

The district will give reasonable notice to all students enrolled in a course that includes the dissection of an animal and students' parent(s)/legal guardian(s) about their rights to seek an alternate project to dissection. Such notice shall be made available upon request at the school and distributed to parents and students enrolled in a course that includes dissection at least once at the beginning of the school year.

Instruction in the Humane Treatment of Animals

Students in elementary school must receive instruction in the humane treatment and protection of animals and the importance of the part they play in the economy of nature as well as the necessity of controlling the proliferation of animals that are subsequently abandoned and caused to suffer extreme cruelty. Such instruction shall be for a period of time as specified by the Board of Regents and may be joined with work in literature, reading, language, nature study, or ethnology.

At the start of the school year, teachers of courses that include animal dissection shall give notice to the students in those classes of their opt-out rights and responsibilities under the law and this policy. Such notice shall be shared with parents of those students and also be available upon request.

Use of Service Animals

The Board allows the use of service animals on school grounds by individuals with disabilities, subject to restrictions permitted by federal and/or state law, and procedures established by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. **The service animal must be under the control of the handler through the use of a harness, leash, or other tether, unless the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of its work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means).**

For the purpose of this policy, a service animal is defined as any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, will not be considered service animals.

The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. The crime-deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.

Where reasonable, the Board also allows the use of miniature horses on school grounds by individuals with disabilities. Such use will only be permitted where a miniature horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks to benefit an individual with a disability. The use of miniature horses by individuals with disabilities will be subject to the considerations and restrictions permitted by federal and/or state law.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee may create regulations and/or building-specific rules regarding the use of service animals and miniature horses on school grounds by individuals with disabilities.

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)

Adoption date: