

Adopted: 12-15-04
Reviewed: 8-18-17 by Board of Directors
Revised:

BLUFFVIEW MONTESSORI SCHOOL POLICY 630 ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM

I. PURPOSE

Bluffview Montessori School recognizes the instructional benefits of animals in the classrooms and supports their inclusion when appropriate.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

In regard to classroom animals, Bluffview Montessori School seeks to balance the needs of health and safety (of staff and students) and the need for hands-on learning that the animals can provide.

III. GUIDELINES

A. ANIMALS MAY BE USED FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES

1. Curriculum-related projects and activities,
2. As an aid for an individual with disabilities (policy 535).

B. CONDITIONS FOR THE PRESENCE OF ANIMALS

1. Animals may be present in school and the classroom as a part of the curriculum only when the following conditions have been met:
 - a. The responsible staff member notifies administration in writing that an animal is being considered.
 - b. Provisions have been made for appropriate housing and humane care of the animal.
 - c. Precautions have been taken to protect the health and safety of students and staff.
 - d. Other staff members and parents of students in the affected classroom(s) have been notified and adjustments have been made to accommodate verified health-related or other concerns. The presence of an animal shall be disallowed if the documented health concerns of a staff member or student cannot be accommodated, except when an animal is used as an aid to a student or employee with a disability (policy 535),
2. Vet certified reptiles must be properly handled, cleaned, and cared for by staff. Children will be instructed in their proper care. Amphibians and reptiles are not allowed in Children's House as a permanent fixture. They may be brought in for viewing for a day, then removed—no enclosure cleaning or student handling will be allowed on campus.

3. Baby ducks and chicks are allowed for educational purposes, but must be removed after observation is over due to a high risk of salmonellosis and campylobacteriosis.

4. Animals that pose a threat are not allowed, such as but not limited to poisonous animals (spiders, snakes, insects), unless venom has been surgically removed, or wild animals. Examples include hedgehogs, brushy-tailed opossums, wild rodents, wolf hybrids (crosses between wolves and dogs), and stray animals.

5. Any animal displaying threatening behavior should be removed from the classroom.

C. IN CASE OF INJURY DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF ANIMALS

1. Call the proper authorities immediately, either the Center for Disease Control or Public Health.
2. Notify parents with an injury report.

D. ALLERGIES; FEAR OF ANIMALS

If a student or employee notifies Bluffview Montessori School that he or she is allergic to a classroom animal, Bluffview Montessori School will meet with a parent(s) of the student and the school nurse to determine if the animal poses a threat to the student's health. Administration will act accordingly following that meeting/discussion. Fear of animals is generally not a valid reason for prohibiting the presence of a service animal.

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 535 (Service Animals in Schools)