

6.6 LIVE ANIMAL/PET POLICY

I. PURPOSE

Vanguard Academy (Vanguard) strives to create an educational environment that promotes academic and personal excellence in its students. The school recognizes that when properly utilized, live animals/classroom pets can enhance the education curriculum. This policy helps to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all students & staff by controlling the impact that live animals/classroom pets have on the school environment.

II. POLICY

Vanguard recognizes that some individuals are susceptible to various allergens, diseases, or may have medical complications while near animals. As a result, the school has developed a policy to ensure the well-being of all individuals. This policy also helps ensure the humane and respectful treatment of live animals. Teachers may keep live animals as pets in the classroom. Pets should be utilized as a teaching tool for the advancement of students and not merely acquired for their entertainment value. Prior to adopting a classroom pet, teachers should determine whether or not alternative methods to live animals are more favorable for instructional purposes. Pets are not allowed in the classroom without the express written consent from Administration. All required school procedures must be met in order to maintain the pet in the classroom. Administration has the right to remove a classroom pet at any time.

III. DEFINITIONS

Definition of a *classroom pet*: A classroom pet is an animal that resides in the school facility during the school year and is cared for and observed by Vanguard Academy teachers and students.

1. Acceptable classroom pets: Only domestic animals may be kept as pets. Live animals for use as classroom pets must be purchased. Classroom pets should be diurnal (awake during the day.) Under appropriate conditions, acceptable pets may include, but not be limited to: fish and other approved aquatic animals, gerbils, guinea pigs, domestic rats and mice, caterpillars, butterflies, stick insects, approved non-dangerous insects, and approved non-dangerous spiders.

2. Unacceptable classroom pets: No exotic or wild animals may be kept as pets (including locally caught animals). Unacceptable pets include, but are not limited to: reptiles and amphibians (including frogs, turtles, lizards, and snakes), dangerous insects, dangerous spiders, birds, hamsters, rabbits, ferrets, chinchillas, and any other species deemed inappropriate, unsafe, or a health hazard as determined by the Director, Vanguard Board of Directors, or the Department of Health. Limited special exceptions may be granted by the Director to approve specific amphibians or reptiles determined to cause minimal health or safety risk in the classroom to either people or the animal.

Definition of a *visiting pet*: A visiting pet is an animal that comes to the school on a visiting basis for a short period of time and does not reside at the facility.

Visiting pets should be included in the teacher's lesson plan in order to provide a positive, enriching learning experience for the students. Visiting pets are not permitted in the hallways or other common areas during the school day. All of the visiting pet's waste must be completely removed immediately, so that children have no access to it. Visiting pets must not be in the kitchen or dining area. Visiting pets

must have all vaccinations required by local ordinance. Written documentation of vaccinations must be presented prior to the visit and kept on file for review.

IV. GENERAL POLICY GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

1. Before acquiring a classroom pet, the teacher must investigate whether any student is:
 - A. allergic or sensitive to any particular species, their food, or bedding materials
 - B. immune-compromised, and therefore more susceptible to zoological illnesses
2. Teachers must provide parents and guardians with information about the classroom pet, the purpose of acquiring the animal (how its care will fit into the curriculum), and a plan for how any potential injuries (bites, scratches, etc.) will be managed.
3. Teachers must request written permission from the Director through the appropriate required school form. Neither students nor staff may bring or keep animals in school without the permission of the Director.
4. Upon notification by students, parents, teachers, or administration of animal sensitivity, a classroom may be required to be kept animal free. Animals must be removed from the classroom if the administration feels that it is in the best interest of the students and/or the school.
5. The classroom teacher is considered the animal's primary caregiver and is responsible to ensure that all of the animal's physical and psychological needs are met. These needs include, but are not limited to: appropriate diet, handling, housing, exercise, vaccinations, veterinary care, and socialization. Appropriate care must be provided for the pet during weekends, holidays, and vacations.
6. Cleanliness standards must be established for all animal housing. Animal housing must be checked regularly to ensure these cleanliness standards are maintained daily, including during weekends, holidays, and vacations. Animal waste must be disposed of properly (double bagged and immediately removed to outside dumpster). It is recommended that a classroom log is created to track cleanings and feedings.
7. Animals should be housed in a quiet area of the classroom away from windows, direct sunlight, heating vents, and drafts. Classroom teachers should ensure that animals are not left in the classroom during times when the building temperature may not be appropriate for the animal (e.g. during the nighttime, weekends, holidays, and vacations.)
8. Animals and their cages must be located as far away from ventilation systems as possible in order to avoid circulating allergens.
9. Children must be instructed in appropriate hygiene practices regarding the pet. Children are to immediately wash their hands after handling the pet or cleaning its habitat. 77
10. Children are to be instructed on safe handling of the pet. Children must be closely supervised at all times while interacting with the pet, for the welfare of both the children and the pet.

11. Classroom pets are not permitted to breed. If several animals of the same species are being maintained as classroom pets, males and females should be kept separate at all times

12. Animals are not allowed on busses.

13. Animals used for the purpose of assisting individuals must be registered in the front office upon arrival.

Approved: 08/15/2015