

The purpose of this policy is to provide information to promote safety for faculty and students when animals are brought into the classroom and to provide guidance about which animals pose a public health threat in a school setting.

Animals Prohibited From School

Rabies is not limited to Vermont's raccoon and fox populations. Any fur-bearing animal is susceptible to this very serious fatal disease and, if infected, can transmit it to students and staff. The risk in a school or other group setting is that a single wild animal or unvaccinated pet carrying rabies has the potential to expose a large number of children.

The Vermont Department of Health recommends that the following animals be prohibited from schools.

Wild Animals and Domestic Stray Animals—Wild animals pose a risk for transmitting rabies as well as other zoonotic diseases (disease which can be transmitted from animals to people) and, therefore, should not be allowed in schools or handled by staff and children. Because of the high incidence of rabies in bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes and other wild animals, these animals should not be permitted on school grounds under any circumstances (including dead animals).

Pets, Dogs, Cats, Wolf-Hybrids, Ferrets, Reptiles, Farm and other Animals—These pets do not belong in the school. They may pose a risk for transmitting rabies, as well as parasites, fleas, other diseases and injuries.

Bat Houses—Bats pose a high risk for transmitting rabies. Bat houses should not be installed on school grounds.

Exception: Guide, Hearing and Other Service Dogs or Law Enforcement Dogs—These animals may be allowed in school or on school grounds with proof of current rabies vaccination.

Guidelines for Other Animals

Laboratory animals and preserved specimens will be permitted in classrooms in the discretion of the administration when those animals and specimens serve a valid educational purpose.

Fish—Fish pose very limited health risk and may be allowed in the classroom. Disposable gloves should be worn when cleaning aquariums and tank water should not be disposed of in sinks that are used for food preparation or drinking water.

Implementing and Communicating the Animal Policy

To effectively protect students and staff, the entire school community must follow this Animal Policy. Parents, teachers, school nurses and other staff must be reminded of the policy on a regular basis and know of its provisions.

Date Warned: September 3, 2013
Date Adopted: September 16, 2013