



## SNOW Position Statement: Animals in the Classroom

### **History:**

Animals have been a part of the learning experience of students for many years. They can be effective teaching aids that directly support learning strategies with positive benefits of bonding, calming and caring. In more recent years discussion has ensued regarding the purpose of animals in the classroom and the individual or population they are intended to support.

### **Description of Issue:**

The human/animal bond is therapeutic and well established. Animals are effective teaching aids and encourage empathy, respect for life, caring, and responsibility whether visiting, or residing in a classroom. There is, however, potential for adverse effects on student and staff health and well-being that need to be carefully considered:

- Allergic reactions
- Scratches / and or bites
- Asthmatic reactions
- Infections
- Infestations
- Transmission of disease
- Anxiety or fear

### **Conclusion:**

It is the position of the School Nurse Organization of Washington (SNOW) that the practice of keeping animals in the classroom for instructional purposes be carefully monitored. Students and staff with allergies or other special needs must be considered, along with any state regulations as school districts develop and implement policies and procedures. Attention to potential for infection, disease transmission, allergic reactions and injury is a necessary safeguard for the entire school community. School districts need to be aware of appropriate measures to limit both risk of harm and liability. This position statement does not apply to service animals for the disabled.

### **References/Resources:**

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Americans with Disabilities Act, 28 CFR Section 38.302

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[WAC 246-100-191 Animals—General measures to prevent human disease.](#)

[WAC 246-100-192 Animals in public settings—Measures to prevent human disease.](#)

[WAC 246-100-197 Rabies—Measures to prevent human disease.](#)

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