

At Brevard Academy: A Challenge Foundation Academy (BA-CFA) animals may be brought into the classroom for educational purposes. However, they must be appropriately and humanely cared for, and properly handled. No staff member shall bring any animal (for this purpose animal shall include insects or any living thing such as a butterfly larvae or viable egg but not plants) onto school grounds or to a school sponsored activity or authorize any other individual to do so without the permission of the School Director or his/her designee.

Since animals can also be a source of allergens, asthma triggers, and microorganisms that can cause infectious diseases, appropriate guidelines for the use, handling and care of such animals shall be followed. BA-CFA also recognizes the North Carolina Division of Public Health Guidelines Animals in Schools – November 2008 when granting permission.

Animals classified as "service animals" will be permitted in the school/on school property as provided in Policy 4320 Service Animals. Cross Reference Policy 4310 Animals on School Property.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of establishing guidelines for animals in the classroom is:

1. To minimize susceptible students' exposure to potentially harmful allergens,
2. To inform staff about precautions and necessary conditions regarding animals,
3. To establish guidelines for communication with parents regarding animals in the classrooms.

**GUIDELINES:**

**Guidelines for the use of animals in schools/classrooms:**

1. Cats and dogs other than service animals in the classroom should be limited to very brief and infrequent visits, if at all, and tied to student instruction. They can be triggers for many children with asthma and allergies.
2. Sanitation
  - a. Hand washing with soap and water is mandatory for school staff after handling animals, cage debris, or animal supplies.
  - b. Students should not be allowed to clean up any excretory waste from the animals or handle unclean cages or equipment used by animals without appropriate supervision, safety equipment, and training. Proper hand washing should always follow such activities.
  - c. The area for cleaning cages and all animal care equipment must be maintained separate from any food preparation, food storage, or eating area for students.
  - d. Staff will use appropriate disinfecting methods to clean up all excretory waste and cages. This should be done while students are not present and with proper ventilation. A solution of

- 1:10 bleach water is recommended and should be well marked and stored out of the reach of children.
- e. Urine from rodents is a trigger for many students with asthma and allergies. Student exposure should be limited.
3. Indoor air quality
- a. Animals should be located away from air supply and return vents to avoid circulating allergens.
  - b. The areas near where the animals are housed must be kept sanitary and clean to minimize pollutants from becoming airborne. Animal cages must be located on hard surface floor (not carpet).
4. Containment:
- a. Safe and appropriate cages must be used for all animals visiting the classroom. Generally, aquariums make excellent cages and are easy to keep clean and maintain. Teachers with limited or no experience working with animals in the classroom should check with a veterinarian or another teacher with successful animal experience. Animals should not be allowed to roam around either the classroom or school building.
  - b. Animals should be kept away from carpeted areas in order to minimize the transfer of allergens to the carpets, and eliminate the possibility of soiling the carpet.
  - c. A teacher or supervisor familiar with proper animal handling **MUST** be present when animals are taken out of a cage and handled by students.
  - d. Any animal that displays aggressive behavior must be removed from the classroom immediately.
5. Communication:
- a. Parents need to be informed in advance of any animals living in their child's classroom. This is especially important for the elementary level, since the children are in the same room most of the day. Many students have allergies/asthma that could be worsened by exposure to animals. If any parent objects to the presence of an animal in their child's classroom, appropriate measures will be taken to help ensure the health and well-being of the child.
  - b. Teachers must convey rules regarding animal interaction and children must be taught to gently interact or handle them.
  - c. Specific types of animals will be restricted if a concern is expressed by staff, students or parents.
  - d. BA-CFA reserves the right to ban certain animals if they pose a threat to the safety or comfort of staff and students at the discretion of the School Director.
6. Animal Health:
- a. Animals must be in good health and have appropriate up-to-date immunizations and examinations by a veterinarian, as needed. A copy of a document verifying the animal's up to date immunizations must be kept on file in the school office. Outside groups or

organizations should also be asked to provide similar verification if bringing animals into the school for presentations.

- b. Animals brought to the school should be socialized to a classroom setting.
- c. Reptiles can carry salmonella and require extra vigilance with hand washing after handling.
- d. Careful arrangements for holiday and weekend care must be developed and comprehensive written care guidelines provided to those responsible for the well being of the animals.