

CARE AND HANDLING OF ANIMALS ON SCHOOL PREMISES

Woodland Montessori School

402 S. Coleman Rd, Spokane Valley WA, 99203

"Solicitous care for living things affords satisfaction to one of the most lively instincts of the child's mind. It is easy, therefore, to organize an active service for the care of plants and, more particularly, of animals. Nothing is better calculated than this to awaken an attitude of foresight in the little child who lives through his fleeting moments without thought for the days to come. When he knows that some animals need him, that the little plants will dry up if he does not water them, his love binds together with a new thread the passing moments and the day which is to follow."

– Dr Montessori (*The Discovery of the Child*, pg 92)

Given what we know of the importance of caring for living things in the development of the whole child, Woodland will provide children with the opportunity to observe, care for (in indirect ways when necessary for safety), and understand animals from various domains around the school. In order to have animals in the classrooms as pets or for study, we must comply with some safety notifications as a licensed facility. Please read the notifications below, and reach out to our director if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for helping us to support the children in their discovery of living things.

Animal Restriction Notice:

- Animals will be inaccessible to children with pet allergies.
- Before a child enters an area where animals have been, it must be cleaned and disinfected.
- No aggressive or harmful animals will be allowed on the premises.
- No animals are allowed:
 - Around infants and toddlers, where any child eats, sleeps or active plays areas, entrances, hallways, in food preparation areas, in children's restrooms, in children's hand washing sinks.
- Reptiles and amphibians are not allowed to be held by children 5 years or younger, nor can they handle the animals or containers. Due to high risk of disease transmission these animals will remain in their enclosure during hours when the children are present. They will only observe them through the glass terrarium.
- All cages/containers will be secured and must not be a falling hazard.
- Any equipment needed for the animal will be inaccessible to the children and safe.
- Animals must be located only where the environment can be cleaned and sanitized (example: no carpeted areas).
- Local health jurisdiction requirements for the number of animals on the premises must be met. Animals on our Premises (including visiting animals)

List of Animals:

- We will have a bunny and a tank of fish in the Red classroom, stick bugs and parakeets in the Yellow classroom, and a gecko in the Blue classroom.
- Common health risks associated with these animals:
 - Geckos, and all reptiles, carry the risk of spreading salmonella. For this reason, the children will not handle the gecko or be present during its direct care. Instead, they will participate in caring for it through observation and reporting about its needs to their teacher who will address its needs when children aren't present in the room.
 - Parakeets can be carriers of respiratory diseases such as allergic alveolitis or psittacosis. For this reason, they will live high enough to be out of reach of the children, and the children will only participate in indirect care, such as measuring out food and water that the adults then give to the birds.
 - Rabbits can pose some health risks to humans, but they are generally clean and don't pose a significant risk. We plan to have the bunny updated on all of its vaccines to prevent any transmissible illness. The children will be able to handle the bunny provided that there are no allergies preventing this in a given classroom community.
 - Fish are inaccessible to children. Although uncommon, there is a human health risk to consider when keeping fish – mycobacterial infections can be transmitted by aquarium fish, and can cause skin infections. The risk of infections is higher for people whose immune systems are not fully functional. For this reason, staff will handle the cleaning and care of the fish tank. Staff person(s) assigned to the care and feeding of the fish is/are Allie and Makaya. Fish food is kept out of children's reach and is located on the mantle above the tank. The utility sink in the janitor's closet is used for cleaning of the Fish Tank and utensils, and the toilet is used for disposing of used water. The fish tank is secured from falling and is located in the Red classroom.
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- Our animals will receive treatment when needed at Lincoln Heights Veterinary Clinic at 2829 E 27th Ave, Spokane, WA 99223.
- Animals are not allowed to use the children's play areas inside or outside as a restroom. All containers or cages will prevent debris from spilling out of the container or cage.
- The staff assigned to the individual animal is responsible for the care and treatment of the animal at all times including disasters. Staff responsible for animals are the lead guides of the classrooms. These teachers plan to care for the animals when our facility is closed.
 - In a disaster the animal's emergency supplies and records are kept in the backpack with all other emergency supplies.
 - Staff has committed to provide appropriate food, water, environment, and care for our pets. Animal containers and cages are cleaned and disinfected weekly or as often as needed (immediate cleaning and disinfecting if animal odors are evident). Cages, litter boxes, and containers will be cleaned and disinfected in utility areas – not around child areas.

- Handling:
 - Only trained animals that tolerate handling can interact with the children. Must be healthy and free of disease or pests (fleas, ticks, etc.) In our school, children will handle the bunny and our stick bugs.
 - We will immediately stop interaction with animals showing stress or harmful behaviors. (Decide about keeping such the animals).
 - If children handle/touch/hold the animals or their cages/containers the following procedures and rules will be in place (Note: a handwashing poster must be posted by the animal). Remember: Children and staff will wash their hands in the nearest hand-washing sink after handling animals or touching containers where the animal is located. Post handwashing sign near the animal cage/container, etc.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedure:

- A hand washing poster will be posted near all animal enclosures, and children and staff are directed to wash their hands after touching pet enclosures or tanks.
- Staff will either bring the animal to the utility area or place the animal in a temporary cage or container. The area around the pets will be kept clean at all times and disinfected at least once a day and more often if necessary.
 - Clean and disinfect the utility sink and counter.
 - Wash hands and wear gloves.
 - All debris and waste will be discarded in a plastic bag, tied and placed in the garbage.
 - Container /cage etc. will be cleaned and disinfected using soap and water, rinse, and bleach solution refer to “Guidelines for Mixing Bleach”. Cage/container will be allowed to air dry before returning the pet, the cage, or container unless an alternative method is approved.
 - Clean and disinfect the sink, faucet, and counter.
 - Remove gloves and wash hands.
 - Return pet to container or cage.
 - Wash hands.