

# Newburyport Public Schools Health Guide for Teachers

## Animals in the Classroom



Animals in the classroom can be effective teaching aids, but animals may carry parasites, bacteria or other infectious organisms that can be transmitted to people (zoonotic diseases). These diseases can cause diarrhea, blood infections, pneumonia, or brain infections, some of which can be life threatening.

Children are often more susceptible to exposure to zoonotic diseases and parasitic infections than adults because of their lack of hand washing and greater propensity for putting hands in their mouths. District guidelines for animals in the classroom have been developed to minimize exposure to these diseases.



**Prior to introducing animals in the classroom, teachers must do the following:**

- a. Consult with their School Nurse
- b. Review Newburyport Public Schools [Health and Safety Guidelines for Animals in the Classroom](#).
- c. Consult with the School Nurse to:
- d. determine if there are any health concerns to take into account, including allergies;
- e. review animal care products (food and bedding) to be used, and;
- f. discuss any special safety precautions that may be needed for a particular animal. This consultation will include outside animal care consultants, as appropriate.
- g. Notify parents as detailed in the guidelines.
- h. Participate in animal handling, care, and safety training as appropriate to the animal and setting. This training may be provided by outside animal care consultants, as appropriate.
- i. Hang hand washing and animal safety posters in the classroom, as appropriate to the animal.
- j. Obtain proof of veterinary care and rabies vaccination, as appropriate to the animal. See District Guidelines for details.



**See the following for further information:**

- Newburyport Public Schools [Health and Safety Guidelines for Animals in the Classroom](#)

- [Guidelines for Safe Handling of Owl Pellets:](#)

Reptiles and Amphibians:

- [Salmonellosis from Reptiles-Public Health Fact Sheet](#)
- [Happy and Healthy: Your Pet Reptile and You](#)
- [Amphibian-Reptiles—Wash Your Hands Poster](#)
- [Happy and Healthy: Your Pet Bird and You](#)
- [Safe Handling of Pet Rodents](#)



CDC Kidtastics Podcasts and Transcripts:

- Don't Kiss a Frog! [Podcast](#) or [Transcript](#)
- Water Frogs, Aquariums, and Salmonella -- Oh My! [Podcast](#) or [Transcript](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Recommendations](#)
- [Massachusetts Department of Public Health Recommendations](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control: Animals in Schools](#)