

# Pittsford Central Schools

## Parent Notification of Live Animals Visiting the School

Your child will be participating in a presentation in his/her classroom/school on     (date)     that involves the use of live animals. Due to safety concerns regarding the possibility of contracting salmonella or other infectious diseases from certain animals, Pittsford Central Schools has developed the guidelines below for the instructional use of animals in its schools. Your child's classroom teacher will provide instructions to his/her class on the appropriate handling of the animals and the required hand washing procedures.

Because of the increased susceptibility to diseases, we recommend that immunocompromised children (e.g. children with cancer, HIV, organ transplants, or other diseases that suppress the immune system, or on immunosuppressive drugs, like steroids or those used in chemotherapy) do **not** handle any animals in school.

**If your child is immunocompromised, has an animal allergy or other issue related to animals, please contact the classroom teacher or school nurse.**

### Pittsford Central Schools: Guidelines For Animals That Are Permitted To Visit Schools

It is important that animals that are brought onto school campuses be clean and healthy so that the risk of transmitting diseases is minimal. Children tend to be more susceptible to zoonotic diseases and parasitic infections than adults also because of their lack of hand washing and greater propensity for putting hands in their mouths. Therefore, animals that are brought to school should be clean and free of disease and external parasites such as fleas, ticks and mites, to decrease the likelihood of the animal transmitting these agents or vectors to the students. Visiting animals should be restricted to an area designated by the principal or administrator.

**All animals, that are brought to school, must be approved by the building principal. Verification of appropriate documentation shall be complete be the building principal or his/her designee.**

If visiting animals will be handled or touched, the procedures for the handling of animals for instructional use, outlined in Section 3, must be followed. The classroom teacher will notify parents in writing that live animals will be brought into the classroom. The notification will include the procedures for handling of animals and a request for notification if their child is immunocompromised or has an animal allergy or other issue related to animals.

The following are specific recommendations for some common visiting animals:

- 1. Verified rabies vaccination**

Current rabies vaccination by a licensed veterinarian should be documented for all dogs, cats and ferrets brought onto the school campus for instructional purposes.

- 2. Health certificates for dogs**

A health certificate signed by a licensed veterinarian showing proof of current vaccination against canine distemper, canine hepatitis, leptospirosis, parainfluenza, bordatella, and rabies must be provided. Animals must have had a negative fecal exam or proof of successful treatment for internal parasites in the past year. The animal should be free of external parasites such as fleas, ticks, and mites and free of obvious skin lesions. Dogs must be housebroken.

### Live Animals Visiting the School

**3. Health certificates for cats**

A health certificate which is signed by a licensed veterinarian showing proof of current vaccination against feline panleukopenia (feline distemper), rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, chlamydia, feline leukemia and rabies must be provided. Animals must have had a negative fecal exam or proof of successful treatment for internal parasites in the past year. The animal should be free of external parasites such as fleas, ticks and mites and free of obvious skin lesions.

**4. Health certificates for ferrets**

A health certificate, which is signed by a licensed veterinarian showing proof of current vaccination against canine distemper and rabies, must be provided. Animals must have had a negative fecal exam or proof of successful treatment for internal parasites in the past year. The animal should be free of external parasites such as fleas, ticks, and mites and be free of obvious skin lesions.

**5. Wild Animals**

Wild animals are only permitted to visit school, when they are presented by a professional, who has experience handling wildlife, and are displayed in enclosed cages. For presentations, the trainer may remove the animal from its cage as long as appropriate measures are taken to prevent contact between the animal and children. Because of the high incidence of rabies in bats, raccoons, skunks, and wild carnivores, these animals (including recently dead animals) are not permitted on school grounds under any circumstances.

**6. Poisonous Animals and Reptiles**

Poisonous animals and reptiles are only permitted to visit school, when they are presented by professionals who have experience handling them, and are displayed in cases which provide a physical barrier between the animal and the children (e.g. animal is enclosed behind study glass or plastic).

**7. Birds**

Birds, both psittacine and non-psittacine, are permitted to visit school, if appropriate documentation can verify the animal is disease free and, on the day of the visit, the cage is clean.