A. Purpose

To establish procedures and requirements for the review, approval, and management of requests by external organizations, Partners, guest speakers, staff, or other individuals, including requests made in connection with Partnerships, to bring animals into schools, classrooms, or non-school buildings for non-instructional, enrichment purposes.

B. Background

1. Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) recognizes that appropriately managed experiences involving animals may enhance learning and promote engagement.

2. Requests to bring animals into FCPS schools, classrooms, or non-school buildings must be reviewed with consideration given to student and staff health and safety, appropriate animal care and handling, and the potential impact on the educational environment. Approval of such requests must be based on whether the animal can be managed responsibly without interfering with instructional activities or compromising the health or safety of students and staff.

C. Definitions

1. "Animal" is defined to mean any living, non-human vertebrate or invertebrate creature.

2. "Partner" is defined to include but not be limited to any affiliated individual, group, business, agency, or organization that is a separate legal entity from FCPS and provides support to FCPS students, staff, and/or schools without financial compensation.

3. "Partnership" is defined to mean an ongoing, collaborative relationship between one or more Partners and FCPS or its schools, where services, resources, or expertise are offered at no cost to FCPS, in support of FCPS's educational mission and strategic plan, and may or may not be formalized through a Partnership Agreement.

4. "School Property" or "School Grounds" is defined to mean any school, including a charter school, or other FCPS facility, including grounds owned or operated by FCPS, FCPS buses and other FCPS vehicles, chartered vehicles, and the facility and/or grounds of any FCPS-sponsored activity involving students.

D. Procedures

1. **Applicability**
   a. This Regulation applies to requests from external organizations, Partners, guest speakers, staff, or other individuals, including requests made in connection with

Partnerships, seeking to bring animals into schools and classrooms for non-instructional, enrichment purposes.

b. This Regulation does not apply to:
   i. Animals used as part of an FCPS-approved curricular program, including animals supplied by the FCPS Living Material Center.
   ii. Animals governed by FCPS Regulation 200-19, *Service Animals and Service Dogs in Training*.
   iii. Animals under the control of public safety officials on school property for enforcement purposes. Use of these animals is under the jurisdiction of the applicable local ordinance; or state and/or federal laws, codes and regulations.
   iv. Animals that, as a result of the animal's presence, is meant to deter crime, or provide only emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship to an individual.

2. **General Requirements for Animals in Schools, Classrooms, And Non-School Buildings**
   a. Student and staff participation in or interaction with activities involving animals subject to this egulation is voluntary.
   b. An animal may be brought into or kept in a school, classroom, or non-school building only with prior approval in accordance with this Regulation and for a specific and appropriate non-instructional, enrichment purpose.
   c. An animal approved for a temporary visit may remain in the school, classroom, or non-school building only for the time reasonably necessary to accomplish the approved purpose.
   d. For the purposes of this Regulation, no wild animals, domestic stray animals, or venomous (*i.e.*, poisonous) animals shall be brought into a school, classroom, or non-school building.
   e. Anytime an animal is introduced into a school, classroom, or non-school building, there shall be a plan for ongoing care and containment. The plan for care and containment must include a plan for care over weekends, holidays, and school breaks, if applicable, or during emergency school closures.
   f. All animals must be in good physical condition and vaccinated, when appropriate.
   g. Prior to introducing furred or feathered animals into a school, classroom, or non-school building, consideration must be given to the potential impact on students and staff with allergies. The decision maker may refuse a request to bring an animal into the building or may rescind approval if a student or staff member has a documented allergy to that type of animal.
   h. Animals must be confined to an approved area and remain under appropriate supervision and control. Animals may not roam freely.
   i. Non-service animals may not be transported on FCPS buses.
   j. Approval of a request does not create an ongoing authorization for future animal visits or establish a right to bring animals onto school property at any other time or for any other purpose.
   k. **Staff Responsibilities.** The teacher or staff member sponsoring the animal visit is responsible for:
      i. Complying with this Regulation and any other applicable Board policies and FCPS regulations, federal, state, or local law;

ii. Complying with any conditions established by the school principal; and
iii. Notifying families that the animal(s) may be visiting the classroom in advance of the visit.

3. **Requests for Animals in Schools and Classrooms**
   a. Requests for animals to be brought into a school or classroom must be submitted in writing at least ten (10) calendar days in advance to the school principal for review and approval prior to the animal's arrival.
   b. A teacher or other staff member seeking grant funding to obtain an animal for a school or classroom must obtain the school principal's approval prior to submitting the grant application.
   c. Requests must include sufficient information for the school principal to evaluate the proposed use of the animal, including, as applicable:
      i. The non-instructional, enrichment purpose for the animal's presence;
      ii. The type of animal and the length of time the animal will be present;
      iii. The organization or individual responsible for providing and supervising the animal;
      iv. The plan for animal care, handling, containment, and cleanup, including any necessary post-visit cleanup; and
      v. Any other information deemed necessary by the school principal.
   d. The school principal may approve, deny, or establish conditions for approval of a request based on considerations including, but not limited to:
      i. The purpose for the animal's presence;
      ii. The age and needs of students who may interact with the animal;
      iii. The ability of responsible individuals to properly supervise and control the animal;
      iv. Health and safety considerations, including allergies, discomfort, or other concerns;
      v. The impact on the instructional environment; and
      vi. Prior experiences involving animals in the classroom or school.

4. **Requests for Animals in Non-School Buildings**
   a. Requests for animals to be brought into a non-school building must be submitted in writing at least ten (10) calendar days in advance to the appropriate Cabinet member or their designee (for convenience, the "Cabinet member") and the Risk & Safety Manager for review and approval prior to the animal's arrival. Both the Cabinet member and the Risk & Safety Manager must approve the request before the animal may be brought into a non-school building.
   b. Requests must include sufficient information to evaluate the proposed use of the animal, including, as applicable:
      i. The non-instructional, enrichment purpose for the animal's presence;
      ii. The type of animal and the length of time the animal will be present;
      iii. The organization or individual responsible for providing and supervising the animal;
      iv. The plan for animal care, handling, containment, and cleanup, including any necessary post-visit cleanup; and
      v. Any other information deemed necessary by the Cabinet member or Risk & Safety Manager.

c. The Cabinet member or Risk & Safety Manager may approve, deny, or establish conditions for approval of a request based on considerations including, but not limited to:
    i. The purpose for the animal's presence;
    ii. The ability of responsible individuals to properly supervise and control the animal;
    iii. Health and safety considerations, including allergies, discomfort, or other concerns;
    iv. The impact on the work environment or FCPS operations; and
    v. Prior experiences involving animals in the non-school building.

5. **Notice, Supervision, and Animal-Care Requirements**
    a. Prior to any animal being introduced into a school or classroom setting, notification will be sent to all families of students served in that school community no less than one (1) week (*i.e.*, seven calendar days) prior to the introduction of the animal using the provided template.
    b. It is up to the parents to notify the teacher or principal if their student is allergic to the animal. Upon such notice, the school principal will confer with the teacher and school health services staff, and may consult central office staff as appropriate, to determine what options are available, which may include changing to a different species or denying or revoking permission to bring an animal into the school.
    c. If a parent discovers that their student is allergic to an animal after it is brought into a school or classroom, the school will work with the parent and teacher to resolve the issue. If necessary, Facility Services staff will clean the location to remove animal dander that may cause an allergic reaction.
    d. The teacher or staff member sponsoring the animal visit will be responsible for the proper control of the animal brought to school for non-instructional, enrichment purposes, including maintaining student safety while the animal is present. This will include keeping the animal in an appropriate cage or container that prevents contact with fecal material and instruction in adequate hand washing after handling animals.
    e. Students are not permitted to handle any animal or be given caring or cleaning duties, unless under the direct supervision of the individual responsible for the animal.
    f. All animals must be cared for in a manner to minimize odor and maintain health. Any animal waste must be promptly removed using appropriate cleaning and sanitizing materials provided by the Operations Department and disposed of appropriately.

6. **Responsibilities of External Organizations, Partners, Guest Speakers, or Other Individuals.** The external organization, Partner, guest speaker, or other individual providing the animal is responsible for:
    a. Complying with this Regulation and any other applicable Board policies and FCPS regulations, federal, state, or local law;
    b. Providing information regarding the animal's temperament, health, care requirements, and other relevant characteristics to support the school principal's review of the request;
    c. Complying with any additional conditions established by the school principal; and
    d. Maintaining responsibility for the animal's care, control, containment, and any necessary post-visit cleanup while the animal is on FCPS property.

7. **Animal-Related Injuries**
   a. The school principal, school health services staff, and the student's parent, if a student is involved, must be notified as soon as possible if an animal bites an individual on school property or if an animal-related incident occurs on school property that could have an adverse effect on an individual's physical or emotional health.
   b. An injury must be reported in accordance with FCPS Regulation 409-09, *Student Injury Response and Reporting* (formerly 400-28), or FCPS Regulation 200-11, *Reporting of Work-Related Injury or Illness by Employees and Volunteers*, as applicable.

8. FCPS assumes no responsibility or liability for the care, maintenance, health, injury, illness, loss, or death of any animal while on school property, or attending an FCPS-sponsored event. The owner or handler assumes all financial and legal risk related to the animal's presence on school property.

E. Related Information

1. **Board Policy**
   a. Policy 413, *Parent, Family and Community Engagement* (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/413)
   b. Policy 500, *Approval of Curriculum and Instructional Materials* (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/500)

2. **FCPS Regulations**
   a. Regulation 200-11, *Reporting of Work-Related Injury or Illness by Employees and Volunteers* (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/200-11)
   b. Regulation 200-19, *Service Animals and Service Animals in Training* (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/200-19)
   c. Regulation 409-09, *Student Injury Response and Reporting* (formerly 400-28) (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/409-09)
   d. Regulation 409-03, *Management of Food and Other Allergens* (formerly 400-06) (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/409-03)
   e. Regulation 432-01, *Guest Speakers* (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/432-01)

3. **FCPS Resources**
   a. **Forms**
      i. Parent Notification for Student Exposure to Animals in School (https://apps.fcps.org/forms/public-regulation-forms/352)
      ii. Request to Bring an Animal into an FCPS Building Form (https://apps.fcps.org/forms/public-regulation-forms/351)

F. Regulation History (Maintained by Legal Services)

Responsible Office	Department of Curriculum and Instruction; System Accountability and School Administration; Maintenance and Operations

Adoption Dates	10/20/26
Review Dates	
Revision Dates	11/06/26