



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
DEPENDENTS SCHOOLS  
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL  
Grafenwoehr Elementary School  
Unit 28127  
APO AE 09114**



December 5, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR GRAFENWOEHR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENTS

SUBJECT: Animals in the Classroom

The issue of animals in school is periodically raised at the school and district level. Usually, the complaints and concerns are brought forward about the presence of dogs in classrooms. Past concerns, brought to our attention by parents and teachers, center around the fact that some students may suffer from asthma and allergies aggravated by animals. This puts these particular students at a disadvantage during the instructional day, as they must deal with a health issue, which through no fault of their own, is created by the instructional environment. While some pets are very well trained, children are very impulsive. Regardless of the precautions that can be taken, any pet can have a "bad" day and bite students either intentionally or accidentally. Finally, some students have been distracted during the delivery of instruction by the presence or movements of animals in the classroom.

The issue of turtles and other reptiles and amphibians in the classroom has also come up and is, in itself, a serious issue and one that must be attended to. In 1975 the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) banned the sale of small turtles in the U.S. All small turtles and most of the larger turtles carry Salmonella, which, according to the U.S. Center of Disease Control (CDC), can cause severe illness in children. The CDC has stated that: "All turtles, regardless of size, should be handled as though they are infected [with Salmonella]" \*.

Based on these health, safety, and instructional reasons, we maintain a school policy that dogs, cats, turtles and other reptiles or amphibians, are not to be present in classrooms or in the school generally, at any time. We believe that enforcement of this policy is in the best interest of our students.

DoDEA Regulation 4800.1 "DoDEA Safety Program" states the following:

***4.5.6. Ensure animals brought into the school have administrator approval after coordination with the school nurse and/or available records to ensure the animal's presence will not trigger student/staff allergic reactions. These animals must also have veterinary clearance, except for animals kept in aquariums or sealed containers.***

Any animals that are brought into the school must have written administrative approval and have certificates issued and signed by the local US Army Veterinary Corps Officer indicating that they are safe to be brought into the school/classrooms.

Crystal Bailey  
Principal

David R. Eldredge  
Assistant Principal

\*Source: <http://www.healthfinder.gov/news/newsstory.asp?docID=606184>