

## **No Animals at School**

**Developed by Annette Boyd Pitts, Executive Director, The Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc.**

### **OVERVIEW:**

This activity provides an opportunity for students to explore how rules and laws are written and interpreted. Strategies for writing a good rule/law are emphasized and scenarios examined to determine what a rule/law really means.

### **GRADE LEVEL:**

Elementary grades

### **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

Large chart paper to record responses

### **SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS:** Grades 1-5: Civics and Government

Grade 1: Standard 1: SS.1.C.1.1; Standard 3: SS.1.C.3.1

Grade 2: Standard 3: SS.2.C.3.1

Grade 3: Standard 1: SS.3.C.1.1, SS.3.C.1.3; Standard 3: SS.3.C.3.4

Grade 4: Standard 3: SS.4.C.3.1

Grade 5: Standard 1: SS.5.C.1.2; Standard 3: SS.5.C.3.1, SS.5.C.3.6

### **PROCEDURES:**

Ask students if they know what a law is. Let several students answer and add to each other's definitions. Ask students how rules are similar to laws. Show students copies of some state laws (from the Florida legislature website) as well as a sample local ordinance. Also show students a copy of the US Constitution and emphasize that this document is the supreme law of the land. Laws enacted by the legislative branch cannot be in conflict with the US Constitution. Let students know that the US Constitution was written over two hundred years ago. It tells us about how our government is organized and how it should function. It also lists some of the rights we have in this country.

1. Explain the duties of each branch of government. As an optional activity, have students develop a hanging mobile depicting each branch of government. The legislative branch makes the laws. The executive branch enforces the laws. The judicial branch interprets the laws.
2. Write on the board the following rule. "No animals are allowed on school grounds."
3. Tell students that this rule is being considered for their school. Ask them what they think about the rule. What is the rule trying to accomplish? Will the rule help create a better school? Will the rule keep students safer?
4. Have students examine the rule. Is the rule clear? Is it easy to follow? What should the principal do if someone breaks the rule? Is the rule fair and can the rule be applied to everyone equally? Is this a reasonable rule?

5. Break students into groups of five. Give each group a piece of large chart paper, or a sheet of paper if large chart paper is not available, to write their answers on. Ask students to discuss and agree upon answers to the following questions and scenarios. For each scenario listed, **ask students to serve as judges and decide if each situation violates the rule about no animals allowed on school grounds. Why or why not? How do you apply the rule to each scenario presented. What penalties would you impose for each scenario if you were the principal?** They should write down their answers on chart paper to post around the room or on individual sheets of paper if chart paper is not available.
6. Scenario: A teacher wants to bring in several mice for a science project. The mice would be kept in the classroom in a cage.
7. Scenario: A parent walks her child to school each day and brings their three pound Yorkie puppy on a leash. They walk onto school grounds so that the parent can make sure the child enters the school safely.
8. Scenario: A visually impaired student brings their companion dog to school to help get from class to class.
9. Scenario: A student brings a stuffed animal to school for show and tell.
10. Scenario: A police dog comes on campus with a police officer to investigate a crime.
11. Scenario: A student brings a frog to school in his lunch box to scare the other students.
12. Scenario: A hungry, abandoned dog wanders on campus and a student feeds him leftovers from the cafeteria.
13. Post student responses on the large chart paper, or individual sheets of paper, around the room. Each group should provide their responses to all of the scenarios.

After a discussion, ask students again what they think about the rule: “No animals are allowed on school grounds.” Is it a good rule? Is it clear? Is it reasonable? Is the rule easy to enforce? Does it apply to everyone equally? Should there be exceptions to the rule? What exceptions would you recommend? Should the rule be written differently? If so, how might you rewrite the rule?

Allow each group to rewrite the rule and post on separate paper. The rule should be clear and easy to understand. It should be fair and reasonable. What is the problem the rule is trying to address? What are the consequences for not obeying the rule? What exceptions do you recommend? Post the new rules around the room. Debrief, making comparisons among groups. Discuss with students what life might be like in this school, city, or country without rules.

| No. | Scenario  | Violation of Rule: Yes or No? Why?   |
|-----|---|--|
| 1   | Teacher brings mice to school for a science project.  | <p><b>Yes:</b></p> <p><b>No:</b></p>    |
| 2   | Parent walks a child to school to make sure he arrives safely. Parent has a dachshund on a leash. | <p><b>Yes:</b></p> <p><b>No:</b></p>    |
| 3   | A visually-impaired student brings her companion dog to help her move from class to class.        | <p><b>Yes:</b></p> <p><b>No:</b></p>    |
| 4   | Student brings a stuffed animal for show-and-tell.  | <p><b>Yes:</b></p> <p><b>No:</b></p>   |
| 5   | Police investigating a school crime bring a police dog onto campus.                               | <p><b>Yes:</b></p> <p><b>No:</b></p>  |
| 6   | A student brings a frog to school in his lunch box to scare other students.                       | <p><b>Yes:</b></p> <p><b>No:</b></p>  |
| 7   | A hungry, abandoned dog wanders on campus and a student feeds him leftovers from the cafeteria.   | <p><b>Yes:</b></p> <p><b>No:</b></p>  |

**Would you rewrite the Rule? If so, how?**

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