

DISSECTION AND DISSECTION ALTERNATIVES

In accordance with the 2005 Board of Education's Policy on Dissection and Dissection Alternatives and the recommendations in the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology Frameworks regarding dissection and dissection alternatives in science courses, the Mansfield Public Schools has developed the following policy.

Participation in hands-on life science is important to learning science, and dissections are a valuable learning experience in which all students are encouraged to participate. When dissection is used in the classroom teachers will:

- Conduct lab and dissection activities with consideration and appreciation for the organism
- Plan lab and dissection activities that are appropriate to the maturity level of the students
- Use prepared specimens purchased from a reputable and reliable scientific supply company or, as an acceptable alternative source for fresh specimens such as squid or chicken wings, an FDA-inspected facility such as a butcher shop or supermarket, keeping in mind that the use of salvaged specimens does not reflect safe practice
- Conduct laboratory and dissection activities in a clean and organized work space with care and laboratory precision
- Conduct dissections in an appropriate physical environment with the proper ventilation, lighting, furniture, and equipment, including hot water and soap for cleanup
- Use personal safety protective equipment, such as gloves, chemical splash goggles, and aprons, all of which should be available and used by students, teachers, and visitors to the classroom
- Address such issues as allergies and squeamishness about dealing with animal specimens
- Ensure that the specimens are handled appropriately and disposed of properly, as recommended by the local board of public health
- Ensure that sharp instruments, such as scissors, scalpels, and other tools, are used safely and appropriately
- Base laboratory and dissection activities on carefully planned curriculum objectives
- Be prepared to present a meaningful alternative to dissection to students who choose not to participate in dissection activities

DISSECTION AND DISSECTION ALTERNATIVES

The science courses that include dissections also include dissection alternatives. Upon a written request of a student's parent or guardian, the Mansfield Public Schools will permit a student who objects to dissection activities to demonstrate competency through an alternative method.

Currently, Mansfield Public Schools offer the following courses that may include dissection: Life Science, Biology (All levels), Anatomy & Physiology, and Health Care Physiology.

- All students will be informed, prior to dissection, that they have the option of discussing individual concerns about dissection with the appropriate teacher.

The procedure for a student to participate in an alternative activity in place of dissection is as follows:

- The student will notify the science teacher of their choice to participate in an alternative activity in place of dissection.
- The student will submit a written request from their parent or legal guardian to the science teacher or school principal.
- The student will be provided with an alternative activity to be determined by the teacher who will specify what is expected of the student. Alternative activities will allow the student to gain the same content knowledge as a dissection activity, and will allow for a comparable investment of time and energy by the student.
- The student will accept responsibility for completing the alternative activity within the assigned time and is expected to learn the same content knowledge as if the student was performing the dissection activity.
- The student will be subject to the same course standards and examinations as other students in the course.

This policy will be included in student handbooks and will be provided at the beginning of each school year to all teachers of science courses that include dissection.

ADOPTED: December 11, 2018

SOURCE: 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework

DISSECTION AND DISSECTION ALTERNATIVES

REF: Massachusetts Board of Education Policy on Dissection and Dissection Alternatives, 2005

MGL ch.272 §80G, Experiments on vertebrates; vivisection, dissection of animals; care.