

PENNSYLVANIA STUDENT RIGHTS OPTION

What Does the Law Say?

The Pupil's Right of Refusal: Animal Dissection and Vivisection

(A) Public or nonpublic school pupils from kindergarten through grade twelve may refuse to dissect, vivisect, incubate, capture or otherwise harm or destroy animals, or any parts thereof, as part of their course of instruction.

(B) Schools shall notify incoming pupils and their parents or guardian of the right to decline to participate in an education project involving harmful or destructive use of animals and authorize parents or guardians to assert the rights of their children to refuse to participate in those projects. Notice shall be given not less than three (3) weeks prior to the scheduled course exercise which involves the use of animals.

(C) A pupil who chooses to refrain from participation or observation of a portion of a course of instruction in accordance with this section shall be offered an alternative education project for the purpose of providing the pupil an avenue for obtaining the factual knowledge, information or experience required by the course of study. If tests require harmful or destructive use of animals, pupils shall be offered alternative tests. A pupil shall not be discriminated against based upon his or her decision to exercise the right afforded that pupil by this section an lowering a grade because a pupil has chosen an alternative education project or test is strictly prohibited.

(D) As used in this section, the following words and phrases shall have the meaning given to them in this subsection:

(1) "Alternative education project" shall include, but is not limited to, the use of video tapes, models, films, books and computers which would provide an alternate avenue for obtaining the knowledge, information or experience required by the course of study in question. The term also includes "alternative test". A pupil has the right to refuse any alternative education project or test which may involve or necessitate any harmful use of an animals or animal parts.

(2) "Animal" shall mean any living organism of the kingdom animalia in the phylum chordata, organisms which have a notochord. The term also includes an animal's cadaver or severed parts of any animal's cadaver.

(3) "Pupil" shall mean person twenty-one (21) years of age or under who is matriculated in a course of instruction in an educational institution from kindergarten through grade twelve. For the purpose of asserting the pupil's rights and receiving any notice or response pursuant to this section, the term also includes the parents or guardians of the matriculated minor.

This law was enacted in Pennsylvania in July 1992.