**BISD DISSECTION POLICY**

**DISSECTION FACT SHEET**

**Importance of Dissection**

Many educators strongly feel that there is no substitute for the hands-on learning experience of dissection. Susan Offner, a former Outstanding Biology Teacher Award recipient, writes, “The learning that occurs in a dissection is qualitatively different from the learning that occurs in a lecture or paper-and-pencil setting. No model, no video, no diagram, and no movie can duplicate the fascination the sense of discovery, wonder and even awe that students feel when they find real structures in their own specimens”

The National Association of Biology Teachers states, “The NABT acknowledges that no alternative can substitute for the actual experience of dissection or other use of animals and urges teachers to be aware of the limitations of alternatives.”

Furthermore, “Classroom experiences that involve nonhuman animals range from observation to dissection. NABT supports these experiences so long as they are conducted within the long established guidelines of proper care and use of animals, as developed by the scientific and educational community.”

**Other reasons to dissect**

Dissection is also important because it:

* Helps students learn about the internal structures of animals.
* Helps students learn how the tissues and organs are interrelated.
* Gives students an appreciation of the complexity of organisms in a hands-on learning environment.
* Provides one of the most memorable and instructive units in a school science course.

**Response to the claim that many animals used in research are stolen pets**

Animal activists prey on the emotions of pet owners. They falsely claim that pets are stolen and sold to medical research facilities and suppliers of animals for scientific research. According to the Americans for Medical Progress Educational Foundation, “There is no market for stolen pets in biomedical research. Well over ninety percent of the animals used in medical research are rodents. Dogs and cats account for less than one percent of the total number of lab animals needed by researchers.”

**SCIENCE ANIMAL DISSECTION POLICY**

Parents may request alternatives to dissection for their child if they are opposed to dissection because of religious or ethical reasons. In order to provide a truly fair “choice” policy for classroom animal dissection, the following provisions will be implemented in science class:

1. A student’s grade will not in any way be affected by the choice of an alternative lesson plan, and a student will not be discriminated against based upon the decision to exercise the right of choice.

2. Alternative education projects will be available for students who refrain from the participation in, or observation of, a dissection. The project will require a comparable time and effort investment by the student. The alternative will provide specific activities to be completed and specific resources to be used.

**Lab Safety Precautions**

A dissection lab is an educational as well as exciting. However, the three most important words in doing a dissection are **MATURITY, RESPECT**, and **CAUTION**!

**MATURITY** – Please conduct yourself in a mature manner. There is absolutely no room for horseplay. Stay focused and on task, following the lab procedure, making observations and documenting those observations.

**RESPECT** – Be respectful of your lab partner and equipment. Especially, be respectful of your specimen. Only cut or remove the sections specified in the lab procedure. Do not randomly cut or mutilate the specimen. Keep all parts of the specimen in the dissection tray at all times. When finished, dispose of all specimen parts as your teacher instructs. Nothing leaves the classroom! Remember, this animal is providing you with a learning experience and not entertainment. Treat it with respect.

**CAUTION** – You will be working with sharp objects. Be careful not to cut yourself or others. Use slow, purposeful, repetitive movements when cutting with the scalpel. Do not “saw” the specimen. Wear goggles, aprons, and gloves during the dissection.

**Student’s Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Parent’s Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Parents, check one of the following options.

◻ I give permission for my son/daughter to participate in dissections.

◻ I do not give permission for my son/daughter to participate in dissections.

**Parent’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Students, check one of the following options.

◻ I agree to follow the above-specified BISD dissection policy.

◻ I do not agree to follow the above-specified BISD dissection policy.

**Student’s Signature** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_