

**Animal Dissection**

**Code D5  
(formerly G13)  
Mandatory<sup>1</sup>**

**Policy**

It is the intent of the Leland & Gray UMHS School District to comply with the requirements of Act 154 of 2008 regarding the right of students to be excused from participating in or observing activities involving the dissection or vivisection of animals. Students enrolled in District schools shall have the right to be excused from participating in any lesson, exercise or assessment requiring the student to dissect, vivisect or otherwise harm or destroy an animal or any part of an animal, or to observe any of these activities, as part of a course of instruction.<sup>2</sup>

**Definition**

As used in this policy, the word “animal” means any organism of the kingdom animalia and includes an animal’s cadaver or the severed parts of an animal’s cadaver.<sup>3</sup>

**Alternative Education Method**

A student who is excused under this policy shall be provided with alternative methods through which he or she can learn and be assessed on material required by the course. The alternative methods shall be developed by the teacher of the course, in consultation with the principal if necessary.<sup>4</sup>

**Discrimination**

No student shall be discriminated against based on his or her decision to exercise the right to be excused afforded by this policy.<sup>5</sup>

**Procedures**

The (Superintendent/Principal) shall develop and implement procedures to ensure compliance with the provisions of Act 154 of 2008.<sup>6</sup> The procedures shall include provisions for the timely notification to each student enrolled in the course and to the student’s parent or guardian of the student’s right to be excused from participating in or observing the lesson and the process by which a student may exercise this right.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Act 154 of 2008, Sections 4 and 5. An animal dissection policy is required of all public and approved independent schools regardless of whether the school’s curriculum includes lessons or activities involving animal dissection. Section 5 of Act 154 states: “On or before August 15, 2008, each school district and approved independent school shall develop and implement procedures pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §912(b)...which shall be adopted as policy within the district or approved independent school no later than November 1, 2008.”

<sup>2</sup> 16 V.S.A. §912.

<sup>3</sup> 16 V.S.A. §912(c).

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<sup>4</sup> This provision is a required component of the policy on this subject adopted by the school board. *See* 16 V.S.A. §912(b)(2).

<sup>5</sup> This provision is a required component of the policy on this subject adopted by the school board. *See* 16 V.S.A. §912(b)(3).

<sup>6</sup> *See* Section 4 of Act 154 of 2008; 16 V.S.A. §912(b) requiring procedures that provide “timely notification” to students and parents; processes for students to exercise this right.

<sup>7</sup> 16 V.S.A. §912(b) (1). The law does not provide a definition of “timely notice.” Nor does the law require that the processes for students to follow when choosing to opt out of activities covered by the law have specific components. It is likely that annual notice to parents and students through handbooks or course syllabi will be sufficient to comply with the timely notice requirement. The notice should indicate approximately when dissection activities (if any) may take place in specific courses. Processes for students to use to opt out of activities covered by this policy should indicate how and when student must notify the course teacher of his or her intention to be excused from an activity,

Date Adopted: 11-24-09

Date Reviewed: 6-9-15

Legal Reference: Act 154 of 2007-2008 Adjourned Session  
16 V.S.A. §912

**NOTE: The footnotes in this model policy are for reference purposes only and should not be included in the adopted version of a school board policy on animal dissection.**