Montclair Public Schools
Montclair, New Jersey

Science “Opt Out” Form

The purpose of this form is to insure compliance with science “opt out” and not dissect, vivisect, incubate, capture or otherwise harm or destroy animals or any parts thereof as part of a course of instruction. The schools are required to provide an “alternative education” project to all students that opt out of these activities. (P.L. 2005, Chapter 266 (C. 18A:35-4.25 & C. 18A:35-4.25)

______________________________________________________________

Date of Request____________________________________________________

Student’s Name_____________________________________________________ Grade_______

School______________________________________________________________

I request my child be excused from activities that involve animals. I understand that my child will be provided an alternative educational project.

Return this form to your child’s principal and it will be forwarded to the appropriate teacher.

______________________________________________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian

9/11
Department of Instruction
Frequently Asked Questions about the Dissection Opt Out Law


Q. What does the law require?

A. The law allows public school pupils in grades K-12 to choose not to participate in certain experiments involving animals. The law requires the school to provide those students with an alternative education project.

Q. What procedures must be in place?

A. Schools are required to notify pupils and their parents or guardians at the beginning of the school year of the students’ right to refuse to dissect, vivisect, incubate, capture, harm, or destroy organisms. Parents or guardians are then required to inform the school, within two weeks of the receipt of the notification, of their desire to exempt their child from participation in the stated activity.

Q. How should parents be notified?

A. Information about the pupil’s right not to participate and the parent’s responsibilities can be included in the Parent and Student Handbook. The district may also choose to send a letter to parents about the course requirements and opt-out procedures. Teachers should include information in course descriptions or the course syllabus.

Q. What happens if a parent/guardian does not respond?

A. The process is to “opt out” not “opt in”; therefore, the parent/guardian must notify the school in writing within two weeks of notification.

Q. What are acceptable alternatives?

A. Videos, models, computer programs, books, and other manipulatives may be used to teach the knowledge and skills required by the course of study. The teacher and student should document clear learning objectives and expectations for the alternative project before the student begins.

Q. Where can I find resources to comply with alternative projects?

A. Consult with your science supply vendors to learn about products that are available. Professional organizations such as the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and the New Jersey Science Teachers Association (NJSTA) often evaluate education resources and make recommendations.