



Policy for Animals in School

Written:	January 2017
Accepted by Headteacher:	January 2017
Reviewed:	April 2020, June 2022, July 2024 and
Next review:	July 2025

Policy for Animals in School

Studies show that encouraging children to take an interest in animals can have a positive effect on them and can be used to improve human and animal welfare. Some of the benefits have been identified as follows:

School pets have been found to:

- Motivate pupils to think and to learn, as children have a high level of natural interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment of animals
- Encourage a respect and reverence for life in pupils and thereby improve their relationships with other pupils, parents and teachers
- Foster a sense of responsibility in children
- Teach children to nurture and respect life
- Lead to the development of hobbies/careers in animal care
- Improve academic achievement

Animals in schools also have social benefits for the school community:

- Enhance the learning environment, creating a sense of security and family warmth for the pupils
- Encourage the involvement of parents and the wider community in school activity
- Help to promote the school as an important nurturing influence in the community

Looking after a school animal

At Walmley Infant School, we aim to promote good practice in animal care. Children are taught correct procedures in handling and caring for animals; they are encouraged to take a shared responsibility for the care of the animals, under direct supervision. Children will be taught how to interact gently with our school animals whilst under adult supervision. At the time of writing, there are no pets in school.

Pets and animal contact

Pets and other animals in school can enhance the learning environment. However, contact with animals can pose a risk of infection including gastro-intestinal infection, fungal infections and parasites. Some people, such as pregnant women and those with a weakened immune system, are at greater risk of developing a severe infection. However, sensible measures can be taken to reduce the risk of infection to the children and to staff. Staff should also be aware of any allergies.

Only mature and toilet trained pets should be considered and the Headteacher should ensure that a knowledgeable person is responsible for the animal. There should be a written risk assessment in school detailing:

- the types of animals allowed in the school
- how to manage them and permitted behaviour whilst on the premises
- where they can go and where they cannot go when in the school
- any insurance liability of owners and handlers

Animals should always be supervised when in contact with the children and those handling animals advised to wash their hands immediately afterwards. Animals should have recommended treatments and immunisations, be regularly groomed (including claws trimmed) and checked for signs of infection. Bedding should be laundered regularly.

Cat litter trays should be cleaned wearing disposable gloves. It should not be placed near food preparation, storage or eating areas. Wash hands immediately after removing gloves but pregnant staff members should not carry out this task because of the risk of toxoplasmosis.

Feeding areas should be kept clean and their food stored away from human food. Food not consumed in 20 minutes should be taken away or covered to prevent attracting pests.

Duty of Care

At Walmley Infants we have a 'Duty of Care' in accordance with The Animal Welfare Act 2006 and 2027 updates, to ensure that proper provision is made for the welfare needs of any invertebrate animal for which we are responsible. This applies not only during term time but also during the holidays.

We:

- prepare a risk assessment for each animal
- obtain well socialised young animals from a reputable source
- ensure that each animal enjoys a suitable, optimum environment, in social groups if appropriate
- make certain each animal is able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns.
- make sure each animal is protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease. Routine preventive health measures are practised as advised by the vet - vaccinations, neutering, and health checks.
- groom animals to encourage healthy coats
- keep animals and their homes clean and safe at all times.
- provide a high quality, appropriate diet
- ensure sick animals are promptly isolated and examined by a vet
- have careful arrangements for holiday and weekend care are made with a member of staff.

Review

The effectiveness of the above policy and our practice will be evaluated every two years. This will be done every two years by the Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the whole school community. The Head Teacher will inform the Governing Body and the Local Authority of any incidents related to the details in this policy.

**Staffordshire County Council (Adapted)
Event Risk Assessment Record Form**



1. Workplace	Walmley Infant School					
2. Assessor(s)	Amy Baines (Assistant Headteacher)					
3. Brief Description of Event	Animals in School					
4. People at risk (Highlight)	Staff	Pupils	Parents/ Carers	Volunteers	Visitors	External providers
	Other: Visitors to include pregnant mothers, elderly, people with disabilities and those who have English as an additional language.					

5. Risk Rating

The risk rating is used to prioritise the action required. Deal with those hazards that are high risk first.

Risk Rating	Description	Action Priority
High	Where harm is certain or near certain to occur and/or major injury or ill-health could result	Urgent action
Medium	Where harm is possible to occur and/or serious injury could result e.g. off work for over 3 days	Medium priority
Low	Where harm is unlikely or seldom to occur and/or minor injury could result e.g. cuts, bruises, strain	No action or low priority action

6. Specific Hazards

Tick (✓) if any of the identified hazards relate to any of the following specific themes:

Hazardous Substance	Manual Handling	Display Screen Equip	Fire	Work Equip / Machinery	Stress	Individual Person such as Young Person New/ Expectant Mother or Service User

If any are ticked a specific risk assessment form must be completed separately. For example, a COSHH form must be completed if a hazardous substance is used.

7. Hazard Identification and Actions

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing? List the control measures already in place	What is the risk rating – H, M, L? See section 5	What further action, if any, is necessary, if so what action is to be taken by whom and by when?	Action Completed State the date completed and sign.	What is the risk rating now – H, M, L? See section 5
Animal Health including diseases, parasites	Staff, pupils, visitors and animals. Disease and infections	<p>Animals kept in school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only healthy animals obtained from accredited or high-quality sources. • Animals must not be able to come into contact with wild rodents etc. due to the possibility of disease transmission. • Arrangements in place for care during holidays and weekends if pets owned by school. • Someone involved is experienced in the housing, feeding, handling and care requirements. • Cages and tanks kept secure and clean for the well-being of the animal and the pupils and staff. • Animal is kept in a well-ventilated environment. <p>Animals visiting school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only accredited and recommended visitors to bring animals in to school. • If parents bringing animals in to school linked to learning, they must be kept on a lead or in cage. • Only animals with a calm temperament will be allowed to visit school for the purpose of learning. 	M	If animal purchased and kept in school. Detailed Risk Assessment needed.	If needed	L

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing? List the control measures already in place	What is the risk rating – H, M, L? See section 5	What further action, if any, is necessary, if so what action is to be taken by whom and by when?	Action Completed State the date completed and sign.	What is the risk rating now – H, M, L? See section 5
Bites and scratches	Staff, pupils and visitors Disease and infections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils instructed in handling animals and closely supervised Keep animals away from face Mammals regularly handled to ensure that animals are less scared when being handled. Accredited visitors with animals to school to ensure the only animals bought in to school have a suitable temperament. 	L			
Cuts/minor injury from defective housing	Staff, pupils and visitors Disease and infections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal housing inspected regularly for defects if kept in school. If defect can be mended safely then do so, if not new housing should be purchased and previous housing disposed of appropriately. 	L			
Allergy/ Phobias	Staff, pupils and visitors Skin rashes, irritation to the eyes and nose or breathing difficulties, death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children known to have allergic reactions/phobias to specific animals have restricted access. Staff to be informed prior to animal visits so they can take precautions if needed for their own allergies.. Staff to ensure they have access to the pupil's medication prior to seeing the animals. Good general hygiene and hand washing followed. 	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informing parents prior to animals visiting so staff can be well informed about phobias and allergies. Allergy and anaphylaxis training 	Event specific – staff to clarify with parents / carers	L

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing? List the control measures already in place	What is the risk rating – H, M, L? See section 5	What further action, if any, is necessary, if so what action is to be taken by whom and by when?	Action Completed State the date completed and sign.	What is the risk rating now – H, M, L? See section 5
Hygiene Infection	Staff, Pupils, Visitors and animals. Disease and infections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate provision for hand washing (soap and warm water) readily available. • Paper towels provided rather than communal hand towels. • Do not allow children to touch any part of their face with their hands until hands are washed. • Younger pupils should be observed washing their hands. • All wounds on exposed skin are suitably covered. • Animal soiled bedding disposed of in sealed plastic bags with normal refuse. • Foodstuffs stored carefully to prevent contamination and infestation. 	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure any animal food preparation is done away from staff and pupil food preparation. • Risk assessment to be shared with visitor who is bringing in animals. 	Date and event specific	L
Keeping farm animals	Staff, pupils, visitors and animals Disease and infections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that other members of the school and neighbours are happy with arrangements • Registration with DEFRA (only required if, for example you had > 50 chickens DEFRA encourage keepers to register voluntarily to alert owners in case of disease outbreaks) • Birds separated from wild birds and their faeces. due to the possibility of disease transmission 	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further detailed risk assessment needed if school decides to keep farm animals. 	If needed	L

8. Assessment

Signature of Assessor(s): 	Signature of Line Manager (Headteacher): 	Health and Safety Coordinator: 
Print Name: Amy Baines	Print Name: Helen Murphy 	Print Name: Neil Pettitt
Date Assessed: 8/7/24	Review Date: 10.7.24	Review Date: 8.7.24.

9. Communication and Review

This risk assessment should be communicated to all employees and relevant persons who may come into contact with the hazards being assessed. The assessment must be reviewed annually or following a significant change, accident or violent incident.

Employees informed of risk assessment via all of the following means:	1.Copy of this Risk Assessment on school Sharepoint 2.Urgent announcement (if deemed necessary) to pupils and/or staff EMAIL or VERBALLY
Employees to report newly-identified hazards via:	Oral notification, followed up by written notification to the Bursar or Headteacher
Date of next review:	With review of policy unless any further issues arise.