

Animals in Schools Policy

Date: March 2025

Review: March 2026

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to specify policy direction for school on having animals in school as pets or visitors or on curriculum trips and outings (including staff bringing their own pets in).

As an overriding principle the school would see the value in the children and young people being around, caring for and understanding animals.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all sites at Springhead school. All incidents of animals in school or on trips and outings must comply with this policy.

Aim:

This policy will provide a set of principles that ensures the health and safety of all members of the school when any type of animal is brought in.

Procedures and practice

Health & Safety

In any circumstances where animals are brought into contact with pupils and students, school expects staff to take common sense steps to ensure that the health and safety of those in the school is adequately protected.

All animals must be controlled and any fouling must be cleared by the owners or handlers. No foulings to be done on school premises.

In all cases where an animal is being brought into the school site a risk assessment must be carried out and approved by the Headteacher or her representative. This should cover:

- How students will be taught to pick up, hold, and touch the animal to minimize the risk of escape or injury.
- How any allergic reactions will be dealt with
- Where the animal can and cannot go.
- How food not consumed will be dealt with to avoid attracting pests.

Appropriate Insurance cover must be in place before allowing any animal in school and this is the legal animal owner's responsibility.

Certificates must be provided and kept on file for visiting animals.

The school's insurance provider must be consulted if the animal is being considered as a school pet.

Insurance documentation should be submitted annually.

School should ensure that any animal being presented to pupils and students is certified by an appropriate organisation, where applicable, who can formally assess it to make sure

they're suitable to be used for the purpose they have been brought in for. This can help to assess whether:

- the animal will need to pass an assessment to say it has a suitable temperament and is well behaved
- the animal needs to be fully vaccinated and vaccination certification should be submitted annually.

The animal should be wormed and protected against fleas and ticks and the owner must keep records that can be produced if necessary.

Public Spaces Protection Orders

Some public areas are covered by Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs). If the school is covered by this order, dogs may not be allowed in the area or may be required to be kept on a lead. You can read more on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

The school needs to check with their local authority whether a PSPO applies to the school.

Equality Law

We all have a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that disabled people are not discriminated against, under the Equality Act.

Where a person has a registered assistance dog or other animal, we must make reasonable adjustments to avoid discriminating against them. We must not refuse them service or entry to the organisation.

School Pets

Owning any animal is a lifelong commitment. Only domestic animals may be kept as pets.

Wild animals may not be kept as pets (this includes locally caught frogs, snakes, etc.)

The animal must be diurnal (awake during the day)

The life expectancies of common school pets are:

Guinea pigs – 5 to 7 years

Ferrets – 10 to 12 years

Gerbils – 2 to 4 years

Domestic Rats – 2 to 3 years

Domestic Mice – 1 to 3 years

Fish – 5 to 10 years (goldfish)

Rabbits – 8 to 10 years

Dogs – 10-15 years

Breeding small mammals such as mice or rats is not recommended because populations of these and other domestic animals are already abundant. Mealworms, crickets, and fruit flies make great subjects for lessons in reproduction.

The location of live animals must be notified during fire emergencies etc..

If the animal is coming into regular contact with children or young people then only mature and toilet trained pets should be considered.

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that a knowledgeable person is responsible for the animal and that all assessments have been carried out.

Before acquiring a classroom pet a written agreement and care plan should be completed and submitted for consideration by senior leaders and governors (appendix 1) and a Risk Assessment completed.

The school must investigate whether any student is:

- allergic or sensitive to any particular species or their food or bedding materials.
- immune compromised, and therefore more susceptible to zoological illnesses.

Parents and guardians must be provided with information about the school pet;

- the purpose of acquiring the animal and how its care will fit into the curriculum.
- a plan for how any injuries (bites, scratches) will be managed should they arise.

A care plan must be completed that details:

- The primary caregiver and who is a secondary caregiver if the main carer becomes unable to perform this function
- How health and preventative veterinary care will be provided and who is responsible for payment of this care.
- the housing that allows each animal enough room to move around and to escape the attention of students and of other animals.
- How the housing is secure enough to prevent the animals' escape.
- How the housing is ventilated and provides protection against extremes of heat and light.
- What appropriate bedding and other materials must be provided and how these will be purchased.
- How exercise and toys will be used to enrich the animals environment.
- How the housing will be kept clean and how often this is carried out.
- How any toileting needs will be addressed and by whom.
- how and when fresh food and drinking water is provided
- how the school will meet the needs of the animal over weekends and school holidays. If the animal is kept in school how will food, water, heating and lighting be provided.
- How students will be given responsibilities for feeding and caring for the animal and how they will be supervised
- How, if the animals will be handled, the maintenance of good hygiene with regards to people will be carried out.

Source and references:

Equality Act 2010

Dfe.gov.uk

RSPCA

Other useful documents

Health & Safety Policy

Risk Assessment Policy

Monitoring This policy will be monitored by school Governors.

Animal(s) in School – Written Agreement

This completed agreement form should be handed in to the Headteacher prior to any animal being brought into school. The Headteacher will assess the form on behalf of the governors. A completed care plan and a full risk assessment should also accompany this agreement form.

Area	Response
Animal Type (species)	
Will this be a visiting animal or a school pet?	
Who is the legal owner of the animal?	
If the animal will be a school pet and the legal owner is a staff member what will happen to the school pet if the staff member leaves or becomes unable to work?	
Who will be the primary carer whilst the animal is in school.	
Is appropriate insurance in place for the animal being in school? What insurance is this?	
Who is financially responsible for the insurance of the animal?	
Who is financially responsible for the care and maintenance of the animal and its equipment?	
Who is financially responsible for the health and veterinary care of the animal?	
What recognised training certification does the animal currently hold (if applicable)?	
Is there a suitable socialisation and training programme planned to prepare the animal for school life?	

Area	Response
Has the animal been assessed (where appropriate) to ensure it has the right temperament and has reached the right levels of training to interact with students in school.	
What are the benefits of having this animal in school?	
Have parents been consulted and asked to notify us of allergies etc.?	
Have staff been consulted and asked to give feedback?	
Has a risk assessment been completed and approved by the health and safety team?	
Has a care plan been fully completed and submitted?	

Person Completing this form

Print Name _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Headteacher Agreement (on behalf of governors)

Print Name _____

Signed _____ Date _____