



Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee School

Animals in School Policy

Effective from: **September 2023**

Signed by: *Helen Elphick*

Reviewed: **October 2025**

Next review date: **October 2026**

STATEMENT OF INTENT

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 animals 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, and they can:

- Enhance the learning environment, creating a sense of security and family warmth for the children.
- 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.

HANDLING ANIMALS

There must always be adult supervision when pupils are in contact with animals. Pupils will not handle any animals without adult supervision and permission.

The following considerations must be checked in advance of any such activities:

- The animal is used to being handled.
- The animal is not likely to be stressed by excitable pupils.

- Where there is a correct way to hold any animal, this is taught to pupils from the outset.

Supervising staff will ensure that good hygiene is maintained consistently throughout any handling of animals. While handling animals, pupils and staff must:

- Not consume food or drink.
- Cover any open cuts or abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms with waterproof adhesive dressings.
- Wash their hands with soap and water before and directly after handling animals.
- Keep animals away from their face.

Pupils must be taught by staff the correct way to hold each animal.

Supervising staff will ensure that all individuals handling small mammals are aware of the importance of handling them carefully; the animals will be sufficiently restrained, so that they cannot damage themselves or the handler.

Gloves will not be worn unless it is known that an animal is likely to bite or scratch. In this situation a pair of rubber gloves, which does not particularly reduce dexterity, will be worn as a sensible precaution.

Handling small animals will always be carried out over a table or trough filled with a soft material such as sand/sawdust.

The handling of certain animals will be avoided altogether. Those which are nervous, nocturnal or prone to biting or scratching will only be observed and not touched.

Other creatures, such as invertebrates, can be too fragile to be handled any more than absolutely necessary. Sometimes any handling of an animal should be limited to a staff animal handler, who will have the necessary expertise to do it properly.

Animals will be given adequate rest periods away from disturbances.

DISEASES, PARASITES AND ALLERGIES

The likelihood of diseases being passed on from animals is low. However, allergic reactions to mammals, birds and a few other animals cannot be discounted. These might result from handling the animals or just from being near them and be detected by the development of skin rashes, irritation to the eyes and nose or breathing difficulties.

Hand washing soon after handling animals will help.

Teachers should watch for the development of allergic reactions in pupils who come into contact with the animals.

Children with allergies specific to animals are identified via the Confidential Admission Form. Children known to have allergic reactions to animals have restricted access to those that may trigger a response. In most cases, an allergic reaction will subside once the animal and the affected person are kept apart; in extreme cases, we seek medical advice.

Salmonella bacteria may be carried by reptiles; good hygiene is again required, especially if aquatic reptiles, such as terrapins, are kept.

Good general hygiene and hand washing are essential for risk reduction.

VISITING ANIMALS

Visiting animals: Visits from domestic, exotic and farm animals can enrich learning. We will take the following measures to ensure any such visits are safe and humane:

- No animals will be brought onto the school premises without prior planning and permission from senior management staff.
- We will produce a written risk assessment for all animal visits, considering the safety of any pupils with allergies, a compromised immune system, or behavioural issues.
- We will carefully check the credentials of any potential providers, requesting risk assessments, suitable public liability insurance, welfare policies and references as appropriate.
- We will require animal visit providers/ owners/ handlers to provide details of proposed contact between pupils and animals and assurance that all animals are vaccinated as needed.
- Any animals on site will be safely and humanely restrained or contained when not being held by their owner/ handler.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This policy, and any risk assessments and other documentation related to animals in school, will be reviewed and updated annually, or in the event of a change to school circumstances or relevant legislation. As a school we currently have the following risk assessments in place:

DOG/SMALL ANIMAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Identifying the Hazard	Risk Rating	Control measures	Outcome
Hygiene issues from dogs	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child to wash hands after touching animal• Owner to ensure dog/animal has opportunity to relieve itself outside school premises• Dogs are vaccinated, wormed and flea protected by owner	Low
Pupil expectations	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear expectations for behaviour laid down to pupils.• Owner to have control of the dog/animal at all times and dog to be kept on lead which must be held by the volunteer	Low
Fear of dog harming child. Bites, scratches and animal parasites	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dog/animal on lead and under the control of volunteer at all times• Staff to control children at all times• Child instructed and supervised about how to approach dog/animal	Low
Fire Drill, evacuation of dog	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A clear evacuation exit should be available for the dog and not left in a locked room.• Dog/animal will be under the supervision of the owner/member of staff at all times	Low

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR DONKEYS

Identifying the hazard	Risk Rating	Control Measures	Outcome
Parking of the trailer	Pupils and staff	<p>The donkeys will arrive in a trailer which will need to be parked next to Beachcombers/Globetrotters</p> <p>These parking spaces will not be available to staff on the dates above.</p>	Low
Moving of the donkeys	Pupils and staff	<p>The donkeys will be led by the handlers from their transportation to the field where the activity is to take place.</p> <p>Children will need to be kept clear of the area at this time to allow the handlers time and space to do this in a calm and safe manner.</p>	Low
Injury by a donkey	Pupils and staff	<p>Pupils to approach donkeys in a calm manner.</p> <p>Pupils to listen to and follow instructions from both staff members and donkey handlers.</p> <p>Pupils and staff not to put their hands near to the mouth of the donkeys.</p> <p>Pupils and staff not to walk behind a donkey where possible – where this isn't possible staff to make sure they walk a safe distance from the back legs.</p> <p>In the instance of a bite or a kick, our first aid procedures will be followed as normal.</p>	Medium-High
Donkey faeces	Pupils and staff	<p>Staff will ensure that children are looking where they are walking.</p> <p>Donkey handlers bring and use their own shovel and broom to remove faeces.</p> <p>If anyone steps in the faeces shoes will need to be cleaned off by a member of staff.</p>	Low
Germs	Pupils and staff	<p>Everyone who comes into contact with the donkeys must wash their hands with warm soapy water immediately on return to their class.</p> <p>Children who put fingers in their mouths to be closely supervised – hand gel to be taken out and used for these children.</p>	Low
Dysregulated children	Pupils, staff and donkeys	<p>Therapeutic support plans to be followed as normal.</p> <p>Continuing dysregulation will lead to the child being removed from the field area to safeguard themselves, other children, staff and the donkeys.</p>	Low
Falling from a donkey	Pupils	Staff members to be supporting pupils who are riding, and steps are used to mount the donkeys.	Medium-High
Fire alarm	Donkeys and staff	Staff with donkeys will remain on the field with animals. School will congregate as per fire alarm drill.	Low
Communication	Staff	Someone to have walkie talkie in case of emergency	Low