

Animals on School Premises Policy



MISSION STATEMENT

We love God and each other and follow the example of St Teresa.

We enjoy learning together and doing our best in a happy, healthy and welcoming community.

We learn to be responsible and caring citizens.

"Let us do little things well today".

St Teresa

St Teresa's Primary School recognises that the presence of animals at school can provide a valuable learning experience. The purpose of the Animals on School Premises policy is to allow animals in the classroom while providing for the health and safety of school staff, pupils and animals. The policy identifies categories of animals and the procedures to be followed in order to bring animals on school premises. It specifies conditions under which animals must be removed from school premises.

Aim

The aims of keeping animals in the learning environment are 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

At St Teresa's Primary School we aim to promote good practice in animal care. Pupils 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. Pupils will be taught how to interact gently with our school pets whilst under adult supervision. These aims will be met by ensuring that the below procedures are followed:

Visit Categories

Animals Used in Educational Presentations (single event)

From time to time, animals may visit the school or a classroom for the academic, social or emotional benefit of the children. The teacher organizing an animal visiting the school should complete a risk assessment (appendix B) which will:

1. Identify the instructional purpose or social/emotional objective
2. Provide a statement of the animals health & temperament or verify that the animal is part of a presentation conducted by an experienced animal handler who engages in demonstrations in a school setting on a regular basis
3. Obtain approval to proceed with the visit by the animal
4. Notify parents of the upcoming presentation (Parental consent may **not** be required ie. Where Appendix C has previously been given to parents).
5. Identify any modifications which may be required to meet the needs of pupils who have animal fears or allergies

Classroom Animals

Before acquiring a classroom pet, the Class Teacher will 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
- The Class Teacher will provide parents and guardians with information about the classroom pet, the purpose of acquiring the animal (how its care will fit into the curriculum), and a plan for how any injuries (bites, scratches) will be managed should they arise. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from any involvement or handling of the animals if they wish.

The class teacher should complete a risk assessment (appendix B) which will:

- Identify instructional purpose or social/emotional objective
- Provide statement of animal health & temperament
- Obtain Headteacher's signature of approval to proceed to next steps
- Provide modifications for pupils who have animal fears or allergies
- Obtain Headteacher's final approval
- Ensure that each animal enjoys an optimum environment, in social groups, if appropriate. We are aware that keeping opposite sex animals can lead to breeding and result in welfare problems. Where possible animals will be kept in same sex groups or pairs.
- The environment and well-being of the animals is monitored to ensure that no animal is distressed by classroom or school environment characteristics (e.g. noise, pupil behaviours)
- Routine preventive health measures are sought and practised as advised by the vet - vaccination, flea prevention and worm control where appropriate. Veterinary care advice should be attached to each animals risk assessment.
- Pets and their living areas are kept clean and safe at all times.
- A high quality, appropriate diet is provided.
- Children always wash hands after handling (See Health & Safety)
- Any sick animals are promptly isolated and examined by a vet.
- Careful arrangements for holiday and weekend care are made, either with a member of staff or a vetted pupil's family.
- Staff member follows procedures for cleaning and disinfecting sinks, cages, and surfaces
- Staff member provides instruction for pupils on proper care and handling of animal

Equal Opportunities

All pupils will have opportunities to access the animals under the supervision of an adult. A pupil may not have contact with an animal if they pose a threat to the animal. It will be the Class Teacher's responsibility to encourage the pupil to have the right approach to animals.

Animals Excluded from School or Classroom Use

All Poisonous, venomous animals

Animals Exempt from Compliance with Policy

- Trained & certified service animals supporting individuals with disabilities
- Mini-beasts etc. investigated during field trips etc.

Parents/carers are not permitted at any time to bring dogs onto the school site. This includes dogs being held.

CONDITIONS REQUIRING REMOVAL OF AN ANIMAL FROM SCHOOL PREMISES:

Injury: Any animal that causes injury to staff or pupils must be immediately isolated and removed from the school premises until the situation is resolved. An Accident Report must be completed and the appropriate medical care must be administered.

Health Issue: If a student or staff member has an allergic reaction or other health problem because of the presence of an animal, the animal must be immediately removed from the classroom/workspace of the affected individual or removed from school premises until the situation is resolved.

Aggression: Any animal that behaves aggressively must be immediately isolated and removed from the school premises.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES:

- Appendix A: Best Practices for Introducing a Classroom Animal
- Appendix B: Risk Assessment for the use of animals in classroom
- Appendix C: Parent/Guardian Information Letter (given at time of admission to school)

Approved by Governors: 27th February 2024

Reviewed: Spring term 2024

To be reviewed: Spring term 2027