



Handling & Keeping Animals on the school site Policy



Signed by:

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Chair of Governing Body

Headteacher

Date

Review date: October 2022



WEDDINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Weddington Primary School believes that keeping animals is an effective way of enhancing the educational opportunity and attainment of our pupils. Whilst keeping animals at our school is particularly beneficial to our pupils, we understand that we have a legal duty of care towards any animals we are responsible for, and that this must be a priority at all times. This policy has been created in order to outline the key responsibilities and procedures for pupils and staff when looking after our animals.

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 infection to the children and to staff.

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 agreement within the school detailing:

- The types of animal 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 school
- Any insurance liability of owners and handler

Children should always be supervised when in contact with the animals and those handling animals should be 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 changed/laundered regularly.

A risk assessment will be undertaken prior to any animal being brought into the school/classroom. Parents will be notified and be given an opportunity to discuss any concerns. Where the school has been notified by the parents/carers that their child has an allergy, the animal will be kept away as appropriate.

The school recognises that children can benefit from contact with pets and other animals, increasing their understanding of responsibility and developing empathy and nurturing skills. The development of these skills is a fundamental part of the school's personal, health and social education curriculum. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with pets and other animals. With dogs being one of the UK's most popular pets, children are likely to have considerable exposure to dogs, in particular, outside school. Developing children's awareness of how to behave safely around dogs is therefore important. Dogs may also be brought into school by outside agencies, e.g. Guide Dogs for the Blind or animal rescue charities such as the Dogs Trust.

Risks of Dogs and Other Animals on the School Site

The school recognises that there are risks involved when allowing dogs and other animals on the school site, including biting incidents and barking which may frighten children. Parents may, understandably, have concerns regarding dogs on the school site. It is the school's aim to maximise the benefit of children's contact with dogs and other animals and control risks, by asking staff, parents/carers and visitors to follow simple rules, exercise common sense and encourage the sensible behaviour of pupils around dogs and other animals.

Legislation

The school is required to comply with all legislation including, but not limited to, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. These pieces of legislation establish the standards that must be met to ensure the health and safety of all employees and others, (i.e. pupils, parents/carers and visitors), who may be affected by any school activity.



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The school will ensure that pupils are regularly reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around dogs and other animals. It will seek to offer teaching sessions from external agencies such as the Dogs Trust. Children can become excited and it is important that they react calmly and carefully around all animals. The school will inform pupils that they should:

1. Approach animals calmly and stroke them gently and carefully.
2. Avoid making sudden movements.
3. Refrain from putting their face near animals.
4. Wash their hands after handling animals.
5. Avoid eating close to animals.
6. Never go near or disturb a dog that is sleeping or eating.
7. Always approach a dog standing up.
8. Avoid staring into a dog's eyes as this could be interpreted as a threat.

The following information has been taken from the PDSA website and is for information only.

<https://www.pdsa.org.uk/taking-care-of-your-pet/pet-health-hub/conditions/coronavirus-and-covid-19-in-pets#contents-link-2>