



The Willows School

Animals in School Policy

Date Published	February 2024
Version	2
Approved Date	February 2024
Review Cycle	
Review Date	February 2025

An academy within:



“Learning together, to be the best we can be”

The Willows 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.

1. Aims

The aims of keeping animals in the learning environment are to:

- 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 The Willows 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.

2. Visit categories

2.1 Animals used in Educational presentations (Single event)

The visit organiser should complete a risk assessment which will:

- Identify the instructional purpose or social/emotional objective
- 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
- Obtain approval to proceed with the visit
- Notify parents of the upcoming presentation
- Identify any modifications which may be required to meet the needs of pupils who have animal fears or allergies

2.2 Cold blooded animals Visit by snakes)

The visit organiser should complete a risk assessment) which will:

- Identify the instructional purpose or social/emotional objective

- 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
- Obtain approval to proceed with the visit
- Notify parents of the upcoming presentation
- Identify any modifications which may be required to meet the needs of pupils who have animal fears or allergies

2.3 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)
- Parents have the right to withdraw their child from any involvement or handling of the animals if they wish.

The teacher responsible for the animal will complete a risk assessment which will:

- Identify instructional purpose or social/emotional objective
- Provide modifications for pupils who have animal fears or allergies
- Obtain head teacher'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, and worm control where appropriate. Veterinary care advice will be taken when needed.
- 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
- Any sick animals are promptly isolated and examined by a vet.
- Careful arrangements for holiday and weekend care are made with a member of staff.
- 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

3. 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.

4. Animals excluded from School or Classroom Use

All Poisonous, venomous animals

5. Animals exempt from compliance with this policy

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

6. Conditions requiring removal of an animal from School premises

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 Aggression: Any animal that behaves aggressively must be immediately isolated and removed from the school premises

Keeping Animals in School

Animal:
Classroom:
Objectives:
Teacher responsible for the care and welfare of the animal:
Teacher responsible for the care and welfare of the animal in the absence of above:
Responsibility for vet fees:
Care in winter, holidays and weekends:
Funding for food and other consumables:
Other information:

Animal: Rabbit (Hobnob)
Classroom: Room 8
Objectives: To teach pupils in U2 how to care for a rabbit correctly. To teach pupils responsibility, empathy and care. To enable pupils in animal care to learn how to care for a rabbit. To provide a stimulus for writing/reading.
Teacher responsible for the care and welfare of the animal: Mrs Johnson
Teacher responsible for the care and welfare of the animal in the absence of above: Mrs Whittaker Mrs Elshaw
Responsibility for vet fees: At the discretion of the headteacher depending on the given situation.
Care in winter, holidays and weekends: During holidays and weekends Hobnob will be taken to Mrs Johnson's house. In the rare case of school being inaccessible due to weather conditions the care of Hobnob will be taken on by the onsite caretaker.
Funding for food and other consumables: Donations/ fundraising

Other information: In the case of Hobnob's removal from school for any reason outlined in the policy, she will remain at Mrs Johnson's house as her pet.