



Animals in School Policy

Stockton on the Forest School recognises that the presence of animals in our school can provide a valuable learning experience for pupils. The school is keen to support the beneficial introduction of animals as part of the learning experiences and emotional support that they can provide for children, the promotion of inclusive practices and the celebrating of diversity.

However, animals cannot be allowed to endanger pupil safety or disrupt learning. For that reason, there should be a clear educational purpose for an animal to visit the school. In line with RSPCA guidance the school does not support the keeping of pets on the school site.

This policy aims to clarify the practices and procedures that should be adopted when bringing animals onto the school premises.

Legislation

The school is required to comply with all legislation. Legislation establishes the standards that must be met to ensure the health and safety of all employees and others (pupils, parents/carers and visitors) who may be affected by any school activity and are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive.

The Care and Humane Treatment of Animals

The school has a duty to ensure that animals within the school are handled, treated, and cared for in a humane manner. It is the responsibility of the staff member associated with the visiting animal to ensure that there is sufficient food, water and a comfortable environment to reduce the stress for the animal.

Habitats must be maintained and cleaned by staff, not pupils.

Procedures

Animals brought to school for short term/day visits:

Planning

- Permission should be sought before bringing an animal onto the school premises. Pupils should be obtained from the Headteacher.
- Arrangements for animal visits should be made at least 48 hours in advance to ensure that parents are appropriately notified.
- A letter must be sent to parents explaining the nature of the animal visit and asking families to advise the school of any allergies, or fears the children may have.

Risk Management

- A risk assessment should be carried out prior to the visit of any animal/dog.
- Wild animals or protected species will only be brought to school by an authorised or licensed animal handler.
- Owners should ensure animals brought onto the school premises are in good health and have had all the necessary immunisations or vaccinations. Where possible, evidence should be provided. Animals that are ill should not be brought into schools.
- Access to animals must be restricted for those pupils who are known to have animal allergies.
- Basic hygiene practices such as supervised hand washing, avoidance of contact with faeces, avoiding putting hands and faces near animals mouths should be employed.
- Prior to the visit, pupils should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the animal. ie Be calm and move carefully; no sudden movements; Do not put faces near to an animal's mouth

During the Visit

- Transportation of animals to and from school will be the responsibility of the owner.
- The owner of the animal is responsible for the animal at all times and must take responsibility in the event of any harm accidentally or otherwise.
- Any animal brought to school must remain under the supervision and control of their owner at all times.
- The animal should be restrained on a lead or in a suitable carrier. Dogs must be kept on a lead at all times. This applies to days when school is in session, prior to the start of school and for any time after the school day, whenever the animal is on the school premises.
- Consideration must be given to the number of pupils meeting the animal. Appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that the animal does not become nervous and agitated. Dynamic risk assessment should be conducted throughout the visit.
- Pupils must never be left alone with animals. .
- There should be no physical contact between the animal and pupils unless it is an integral part of the learning experience and is under close supervision of the class teacher/owner.
- Unless the owner has given permission pupils should not feed, or eat close to the animal.
- Pupils should always wash their hands after handling any animal.
- In the event of a pupil or adult being wounded by an animal at school, first aid will be administered and in the case of a pupil, parents notified. The policy for animals in school should be reviewed accordingly.

Bringing Dogs into School Grounds

Dogs are not permitted on the school premises unless prior permission has been obtained.

Once permission has been obtained, dogs brought onto the premises are the responsibility of their owner and should be kept on a lead at all times.

Dogs should not be tied to the school fence or left unaccompanied.

Children must never be left alone with or in charge of the dog.

Dog foul brings a risk to pupil health and should be cleaned up immediately.

Stray Dogs on School Property

If there is a stray dog in the school grounds, the local Council Dog Warden will be contacted.

The school entrance drill will be administered in the event of a stray dog being on the premises during times when pupils are outside.

Dog Owner Walking or Exercising their Dog(s) in School Grounds

School playing fields and playgrounds are private property and should not be used for the purposes of exercising dogs.

Dog owners caught exercising their dog on the school premises will be asked to leave.

If the practice continues the matter will be referred to the Council Dog Warden or the police.

Staff should ensure that playing fields and/or the playground are inspected prior to use to ensure the health and safety of pupils.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governors have a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for animals in school.

The Headteacher is responsible for circulating the policy to parents and monitoring its implementation.

All staff are responsible for implementing the policy.

Policy Date: Summer Term 2018

Review Date: Summer term 2021