



The Governing Body of

**Herons Dale Primary
School**

have adopted the following policy:

Animal Welfare Policy

Reviewed by: Tracy Vise

Date: June 2022

Ratified by Governing Body:

Review Date: June 2025

Hérons Dale believe that opportunities to work with animals provide unique opportunities for learning. We recognize our responsibility to provide a safe environment and positive learning experiences for all pupils and a high standard of care and welfare to all animals involved. This policy sets out how this will be achieved. It has been written with reference to the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and our existing school policies.

Hérons Dale School Aims

Hérons Dale School aims to provide its pupils with:

Happy days filled with learning

Pleasure and stimulation from being around animals can impact a child's emotional state.

Experiences which develop a fit and healthy lifestyle

Looking after animals requires fine and gross motor skills which will be further enhanced as children are given the opportunity to rehearse new skills.

Relevant, broad, balanced, creative and inclusive curriculums

Hérons Dale teachers use a range of curriculums and ideas to ensure our curriculums are relevant, broad and balanced for our children.

Opportunities to be part of the community

As a community school, Herons Dale is alert to opportunities to develop links within the locality and seek to encourage people with special talents to work within the school.

Nurturing relationships

Hérons Dale are aware of the importance of relationships between children, their peers, staff, families and the wider community. Giving the children the opportunity to work with animals will help them forge different relationships.

Stimulating learning environments where pupils feel safe and secure

Hérons Dale provide a range of environments within the school ground which offer a range of differing opportunities.

Diverse and personalised approaches to learning

Staff work closely with pupils to ensure learning matches their needs in the broadest possible sense.

All-encompassing communication

Hérons Dale teachers are keen to make their children aware of the importance of functional communication by using a 'Total communication' approach to empower every pupil to be confident that their 'voice' is always heard

Life skills development

We always strive to ensure that pupils are able to generalise the skills they have learnt, at a pace which supports the development of confidence, in order to help prepare them for their future

Encouragement and support to have respect, confidence and resilience

Modelling of specific praise and support encourages our children to be able to encourage, support and respect each other whilst developing their confidence and resilience to new situations/experiences and new skills learnt.

RATIONALE

Research has shown that stroking or cuddling an animal triggers the release of the Oxytocin hormone which causes feelings of happiness and contentment. Anxiety levels decrease and children can become more willing to interact and communicate with people around them. The following learning, health and wellbeing benefits can be derived from working with animals.

1. To help pupils develop increased respect, empathy and a sense of responsibility for living things.
2. To encourage pupils to consider the experiences and needs of other living things, including other pupils, school staff, and their families.
3. To promote an interest in the natural environment and support hands-on learning across all areas of the curriculum. Students can become more motivated to think and learn as children generally have a high level of natural interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment of animals.
4. To help pupils develop a calm, confident, and sensitive manner when interacting with animals.
5. To demonstrate best practice in the care of pets and other animals.
6. To encourage pupils to consider careers working with animals.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

- To ensure that pupils, staff, governors, parents and member so the wider community can work safely alongside any animals at Herons Dale Primary School.
- To ensure that animals at Herons Dale Primary School are well looked after and cared for

SCHOOL PETS AND LIVESTOCK:

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and animals we will take the following measures before acquiring any school pets or livestock:

- There will be a lead member of staff with an overview of school pets.
- Any member of staff wishing to introduce a class animal or animals must seek permission from the head teacher and agree to take on responsibility for the care and welfare of the animal for the duration of its life. This includes the responsibility to care for the animal themselves, or find a suitable alternative home, if the classroom situation or the health/ temperament of the animal changes and it is no longer appropriate for it to live at school.
- We will ensure there is a robust plan in place for weekend and holiday care of the animal.
- Wild caught and nocturnal animals will not be considered as suitable for school pets.
- We will fully research the needs, habits and temperament of the relevant species to ensure it will make an appropriate addition to the school and that we can fully meet its welfare needs in the school environment.

- We will produce a comprehensive written risk assessment for all activities associated with keeping and caring for the animal/s. This document will identify one or more named members of staff who have agreed to take on responsibility for the care of the animal. This risk assessment process will take into account the safety of any pupils with allergies, a compromised immune system, or behavioural issues. In the case of outdoor animals, we will take steps to ensure that they will not impact negatively on local residents or existing users of the school grounds.
- We will confirm that a local vet will be able to treat the animal/s if needed.
- We will keep parents informed of the plans to introduce the animal/s and ensure they know how to withdraw their child from activities related to the animal if they wish.
- We will assign a budget for the care of the animal/s to ensure ongoing funding is available to provide a suitable level of care.
- We will produce a written plan for how the animal will support the curriculum.
- We will research where the animal is to be acquired to ensure it has come from a reputable source. If appropriate it will live at home with the member of staff responsible for its care, or access to it will be restricted, for a period of quarantine and/or socialisation.
- We will ensure correct insurances are in place and will inform the County insurance team as appropriate.
- The animal or animals will only be introduced to the school once they have been assessed as safe and appropriate for the classroom environment, and those involved are confident that their needs can be met.

CARING FOR OUR ANIMALS

At Herons Dale Primary school we aim to promote best practice in animal care. We will have a named person responsible for the welfare of the school animals and makes sure there is adequate supervision of students who have contact with the animals. Students are encouraged to take a shared responsibility for the care of the animals, under supervision are taught how to interact with them correctly.

Once an animal is resident in the school, we will take the following measures:

- We will provide housing of a suitable size with all necessary features and enrichments. The housing will be chosen with the safety of pupils in mind and checked for any unanticipated risks. If second hand housing is used, then it will be thoroughly cleaned and sterilised.
- We will always keep the housing and surrounding area clean and in good condition.
- We will provide a suitable single-sex social group for the animal/s if appropriate.
- We will provide the correct quantity of suitable feed. All feed will be stored correctly.
- We will carry out preventative health care measures as appropriate.
- We will ensure that any sick or injured animals are isolated, treated, and seen by a vet if necessary.

- We will monitor the behaviour and health of the animal on an ongoing basis.
- Pupils will only handle animals under close supervision from a member of staff.
- We will implement strict hand-washing procedures for all pupils coming into contact with the animal or associated equipment.
- Any cleaning chemicals or animal medications will be stored in accordance with our COSHH policy.

ANIMAL RELATED ACTIVITIES MAY INCLUDE

- Daily feeding of animals
- Daily/weekly cleaning of enclosures and housing
- Outdoor learning sessions
- Reading to pets

HANDLING ANIMALS

To ensure animals become used to humans they should be handled as often as possible, the more they are handled the more trusting they will become.

Only students with the appropriate parental consent are allowed to handle the animals.

Students should only handle any of the school animals when supervised by a member of staff.

When handling animals it is important that good hygiene is maintained.

When handling animals:

- No food and drink should be consumed.
- Any open cuts, or abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms must be covered with a waterproof adhesive dressing.
- Hands must be washed with soap and water before and directly after handling animals.
- Animals must be kept away from the face.

ANIMAL HEALTH

The school will register any animals with a suitable veterinary practice who will keep details of the animals. If an animal shows signs of ill health the vets will be contacted. Animals will be given appropriate inoculations and treatments as necessary.

Appropriate and secure housing is purchased/built according to the needs of the animals for safety and to allow the children to interact with them in a safe way.

Animals will be fed a suitable diet and will always have fresh water available.

Students will help to be responsible for the cleaning of housing etc with warm soapy water – if anything more is needed such as disinfectants or cleaning products then this will be done by staff members.

ACCIDENTS

Due to the nature of the outdoor environment and the unpredictability of animals, occasional accidents or injuries are inevitable. Full risk assessments will be undertaken for all animals brought onto the school grounds.

If an accident or incident occurs it must be reported immediately and a first aid form completed. If an injury occurs that requires first aid a suitable trained member of staff will administer initial first aid. If it is thought that the injury requires more than first aid parents will be notified and recommended to take their child to the doctors or an ambulance will be called. If an animal is repeatedly aggressive or biting then arrangements would be made for its removal from the school site.

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, taking into account 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.

This policy, and any risk assessments and other documentation related to animals in school, will be reviewed and updated every 3 years or in the event of a change to school circumstances or relevant legislation.