



Animals in The Academy Policy

Tees Valley Education Trust

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Animals In The Academy Policy

The Trust believes that interacting with and caring for animals provide unique opportunities for learning. We recognise 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 practice guidance and procedure sets out how this will be achieved.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to the following:

- The Pet Animals Act 1951
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Animal Welfare Act 2006
- The Animals Act 1971
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Road Traffic Act 1988
- The Dangerous Wild Animals (DWA) Act 1976

This policy operates in conjunction with the following academy policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- COSHH Policy

Please note: No animal can visit or be an academy pet unless risk assessments have been undertaken and in agreement with the headteacher.

Our aims in bringing animals into the academy environment:

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, staff, and their families.
3. To promote an interest in the natural environment and support hands-on learning across all areas of the curriculum.
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 develop employability skills, including organisation, planning, team work.
7. To encourage pupils to consider work and volunteering opportunities with animals.

Visiting animals, Academy pets and livestock:

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

- We will ensure there is a robust plan in place for weekend and holiday care of the animal where applicable.
- Wild caught and nocturnal animals will not be considered as suitable for academy pets.
- We will fully research the needs, habits, and temperament of the relevant species to ensure it will make an appropriate addition to the academy and that we can fully meet its welfare needs in the academy environment.
- We will produce a comprehensive written risk assessment for all activities associated with keeping and caring for the animal/s. This risk assessment process will consider 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 uses of the school grounds.
- We will obtain specific parental consent from parents before allowing a pupil to handle and care for the animal/s.
- 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/s if they wish.
- We will confirm that a local vet will be able to treat the animal/s if needed.
- We will assign a budget for the care of the animal/s to ensure ongoing self-generated funding is available to provide a suitable level of care.
- We will research where the animal is to be acquired to ensure it has come from a reputable source.

The animal or animals will only be introduced to the academy once they have been assessed as safe and appropriate for the academy environment, and those involved are confident that their needs can be met. Once the animal is visiting or resident in the academy we will take the following measures:

- We will work with experts to ensure suitable housing 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.
- Housing and surrounding area will be kept clean and in good condition at all times.
- Suitable single-sex social group for the animal/s will be arranged if appropriate.
- The correct quantity of suitable feed will be stored correctly.
- Preventative health care measures will be undertaken including risk assessment as appropriate.
- Any sick or injured animals will be isolated, treated, and seen by a vet if necessary or destroyed if recommended by a vet.
- The behaviour and health of the animal will be monitored on an ongoing basis and recorded for health and safety and animal welfare purposes
- Pupils will only handle animals under close supervision from a member of staff or trained practitioner/volunteer.
- Pupils will be taught about how to behave whilst caring for the animals/s and pupils will be gradually introduced to the animal/s in a planned, gradual way.
- Pupils will not have sole responsibility for the care of the animal/s. Pupils will be supported by a staff member when caring for the animal/s.
- Clear and accessible guidance about how to handle and care for the animal/s will be provided to all pupils, staff and volunteers.
- Strict hand-washing procedures for all pupils coming into contact with the animal or associated equipment will be implemented.
- Any cleaning chemicals or animal medications will be stored in accordance with the academy's COSHH policy and in accordance with veterinary advice.

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 academy premises without prior planning and permission from senior management staff.
- We will produce a written risk assessment for all animal visits, considering 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.

Roles and responsibilities:

Executive Head Teacher:

- Oversee the implementation and enforcement of the animals in academy practice guidance and procedure
- Ensure staff members are trained in appropriate animal care and safety protocols
- Prepare risk assessments (with the Academy Business Manager) and ensure staff read and understand these
- Liaise with parents, community members and relevant authorities i.e. Vets
- Address any concerns or complaints related to animals on site
- Ensure animals are registered with appropriate agencies as needed
- Allocate necessary resources for the maintenance and well-being of animals in the academy
- Keep up to date with relevant regulations and best practices related to animals in educational settings

Academy Business Manager:

- Ongoing monitoring of health and safety, ensuring regular checks and maintenance are carried out by the site team
- Communicate effectively with the Head Teacher regarding any maintenance issues or health and safety issues associated with the animal enclosure
- Prepare risk assessments (with the Head Teacher) and ensure staff read and understand these
- Support the Head Teacher to oversee the health and well-being of the animals
- Update and maintain 'Every' with compliance matters relating to visiting and/or resident animals as appropriate

Site Team:

- Work with animal welfare agencies to ensure appropriate housing and space
- Assist with construction and maintenance of animal enclosures or facilities
- Ensure animal enclosures are safe and secure from any potential hazards
- Conducting routine cleaning and upkeep of animal habitats (in collaboration with staff team)

Teachers:

- Plan and implement age-appropriate activities that align with educational goals and standards

- Ensure that pupils understand behaviour expectations and safety measures and follow hygiene practices when interacting with animals
- Communicate and report with the Head Teacher and Site Team regarding any maintenance issues or health and safety issues associated with the animal enclosure or the animals
- Support with the cleaning and upkeep of animal habitats (in collaboration with the Site Team and Head Teacher as per the schedule and timetable)
- Foster a positive and respectful attitude towards animals among pupils
- Contribute towards the risk assessments and identify pupils that may need additional adjustments to prevent distress to them and/or the animals

Policies and procedures:

- This guidance, and any risk assessments and other documentation related to animals in the academy, will be reviewed and updated annually or in the event of a change to academy circumstances or relevant legislation.