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Lanesend Primary School

Animal Friendly Policy School Curriculum Policy

Signed: Date:
(Headteacher)

Signed: Date:
(Chair of Governors)

Review Date: May 2019 (Every 3 Years)
Reviewed By: Headteacher and Science Lead

Lanesend Primary Animal Friendly Policy

Lanesend Primary School encourages animals in school as they have an emotional benefit to our children. This policy details the basic health and safety issues associated with handling and keeping animals in schools, as well as visiting animals.

Handling Animals

If animals will be handled, the most important issue is the maintenance of good hygiene.

When handling animals:

- Do not consume food or drink,
- Cover any open cuts or abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms with waterproof adhesive dressings,
- Wash your hands with soap and water before and directly after handling animals.
- Keep animals away from the face.

Careful handling of small mammals and other animals is most important; the animals should be restrained sufficiently so that they cannot damage themselves or the handler.

Mammals should be handled daily if possible. This way they will normally become quite tame and accustomed to being handled.

Gloves should not normally be worn unless it is known that an animal for one reason or another is likely to bite or scratch. In this situation a pair of rubber gloves which does not particularly reduce dexterity, is a sensible precaution.

Physical injuries

There is always the danger of bites and scratches, and teachers should check that any animals kept are friendly and gentle in the presence of children.

Small fingers poked towards the mouths of normally non-aggressive animals may be interpreted as an offering of food and obligingly bitten. Children should be made aware of the dangers.

Diseases, parasites and allergies

The likelihood of diseases being passed on from pet animals is low. However allergic reactions to mammals, birds and a few other animals cannot be discounted. These might result from handling the animals or just from being near them and be detected by the development of skin rashes, irritation to the eyes and nose or breathing difficulties.

Hand washing soon after handling animals will help.

Teachers should watch for the development of allergic reactions in pupils who come into contact with the animals.

Children known to have allergic reactions to specific animals must, of course, have restricted access to those that may trigger a response. In most cases, an allergic reaction will subside once the animal and the affected person are kept apart; in extreme cases, seek medical advice.

Consent and Risk Assessment

Parents will receive a letter explaining about new pets and that if they do not wish their child to handle new pets, they must inform the school. A risk assessment is to be signed by all members of staff (teaching and non-teaching staff) and displayed in each classroom.

Cleaning and Hygiene

This is clearly important, both for the health of the animals and for those people looking after them. Hands should be washed before and, of course, after cleaning cages, tanks etc. rubber or plastic gloves should preferably be worn.

After removing soiled litter material, cages should be scrubbed with hot water and liquid detergent.

Frequency of cleaning:

Rabbits should be cleaned at least once a week.

Arrangements must be made for cages to be cleaned as regularly as normal at holiday times.

The care and humane treatment of animals:

Animals within the school will be handled, treated, and cared for in a humane manner. Enclosures must be appropriate to the animal and it is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that the animal has sufficient food, water and a comfortable environment to reduce the stress for the animal. Habitats must be maintained and cleaned by staff.

Soiled Litter Disposal

Soiled litter should be sealed in strong plastic bags and placed with other waste in dustbins.

Visiting Animals

Lanesend Primary School recognises that a visiting animal offers the potential for a very positive learning experience for children to learn about taking care and showing responsibility for animals as well as developing an understanding of the importance of the humane treatment of living creatures. The school is particularly keen to support the introduction of service animals such as hearing dogs or seeing dogs and this reflects the school's ethos of celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion.

Procedures

Animals brought to school for short term/day visits:

Before bringing an animal onto the school premises during school hours, staff and children must seek prior authorization. Children must obtain permission from their class teacher.

Wherever possible, arrangements for animal visits should be made in advance to ensure that parents are appropriately notified. The class teacher will check children's risk assessments for any allergies or fears the children may have.

Any animal brought to school must remain under control of the responsible adult at all times. No wild animals or protected animals will be purposely brought to the building or on school grounds by anyone other than an authorized or licensed animal handler.

Handling between the animals and children will be assessed to determine if safe and appropriate.

Should any child or adult be scratched or bitten by an animal at school, first aid must be administered immediately and in the case of a child, parents will be called. A copy of the incident report will be given to the involved family and the policy for animals in school will be reviewed accordingly.

Children with medical concerns:

Health issues must be considered when assessing the appropriateness of animals in the classroom. Prior to the consideration of the introduction of an animal to the classroom, the teacher should review the medical notes of the children in their class to ensure there is no conflict.

It is the policy of the school to consider the safety, health and well-being of every child when making decisions regarding the introduction of animals to the classroom. When there is a conflict in this area, the Headteacher will confer with the staff member to find an agreeable solution to the matter in consultation with others, e.g. the parents and child, school and others as appropriate. If children have petted an animal it is essential that they wash their hands after the activity and that this is supervised to ensure that it is thorough.

Responsibility:

The owner or handler of any animal, including a service animal, is responsible for the animal at all times and must take responsibility in the event of any harm accidentally or otherwise that befalls a child.