



## **The Spinney Primary School Animals in School Policy**

The Spinney School recognizes that the presence of animals in our school can provide a valuable learning experience but animals cannot be allowed to endanger student 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. There are currently fish in the EYFS classroom but these remain the responsibility of the staff who must also ensure their safety and care during the school holidays.

The 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.

It is the school's policy to notify children's parents when an animal is being introduced into the classroom. 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. Students must obtain permission from their class teacher; staff will obtain authorization 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 about the animal visit and asking families to advise the school of any allergies, or fears the children may have.

Staff or children must ensure that the animals are in good health and have had all the necessary immunizations or vaccinations. Where possible, evidence should be provided.

Any animal brought to school must remain under control of the responsible adult at all times. The animal should be restrained on a leash or in a suitable carrier. 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. Transportation of animals to and from school will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian or other adult.

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.

There will be no physical contact between the animal and students unless it is an integral part of the learning with prior approval received from the Headteacher.

Should any student 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 (signed by the headteacher) will be sent to the involved family and the policy for animals in school will need to 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. All staff must complete a risk assessment form prior to the introduction of an animal in the classroom which must be signed off by the headteacher.

**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, not students.

Reviewed: January 2016

Date of next review: January 2018