

A nurturing inclusive learning community that enables everyone to be their best



CALTON
PRIMARY SCHOOL



CALTON
PLAYGROUP

CALTON PRIMARY SCHOOL AND PLAYGROUP

Pet Policy

Approved by Committee 17/01/2022

Next renewal date: 26/27

This policy links to:

1. Rationale for having pets in school

Encouraging children to take an interest in animals can have a positive effect on them and can be used to improve human and animal welfare.

School pets may:

- motivate children to think and to learn, as they have a high level of natural interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment of animals
- encourage a respect and reverence for life in children and thereby improve their relationships with their peers, parents and teachers
- foster a sense of responsibility in children
- teach children to nurture and respect life
- Increase motivation and pride
- improve academic achievement

The benefits of school pets are far reaching and can be broken down into the following development aspects:

- **Cognitive development** – companionship with a pet stimulates memory, problem-solving, game-playing and can improve reading skills.
- **Emotional development** – a school pet improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. Animals can also teach compassion and gives relief from anxiety.
- **Physical development** – interaction with a pet reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, assists with pain management, gives motivation to move, walk and stimulates the senses.
- **Environmental benefits** – a pet in a school contributes towards the creation of a home-style environment, with all of the above benefits continuing long after the school day is over.
- **Social benefits** – a school pet provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, wellbeing, developing social skills and focused interaction with others.

Pets in school also have social benefits for the school community:

- Enhance the learning environment, creating a sense of security and family warmth for the pupils
- Encourage the involvement of parents and the wider community in school activities help to promote the school as an important nurturing influence. Children naturally identify with animals; we use the children's interactions with animals to teach them how to respect each other and how to show empathy.
- Teaching children to respect and protect even the smallest animal is vital to ensure that we support the development of adults who will continue to show a respect for protecting our environment, animals and plants for generations to come. A child's attitude toward animals can predict future behaviour; we will teach kindness and empathy towards animals

2. Looking after a school pet

At Calton Primary and Calton Playgroup we aim to promote good practice in animal care. Children are taught correct procedures in handling and caring for

animals under the direct supervision of adults; they are encouraged to take a shared responsibility for the care of the animals, under direct supervision. Children are taught how to interact gently with our school pets. Pets and other animals in school can enhance the learning environment. Sensible measures are taken to reduce the risk of infection to the children and to staff.

At Calton Primary and Calton Playgroup:

- We have a named person responsible for the welfare of all animals in school. This named person will oversee relevant guidance relating to each animal and amend practice in response to changing guidance
- Risk assessments will be updated accordingly
- The named person will oversee all animal care and safety throughout the school, but day to day maintenance and feeding will be overseen by designated staff
- Animals remain the responsibility of their owner
- We obtain well socialised young animals
- We register all our animals with a local veterinary practice and seek advice and treatment when appropriate
- We ensure that each animal enjoys an optimum environment
- We practise routine preventive health measures as advised by vets for example vaccination, flea prevention and worm control where appropriate
- We keep pets and their homes clean and safe at all times
- Careful arrangements for holiday and weekend care are made
- We provide a high quality, appropriate diet
- We isolate and treat any sick animals promptly
- All members of staff are responsible for identifying ill health of the animals and immediately reporting it to the School Business Manager, who will act accordingly

Examples of how the pets will be used in school

- Reading programmes: Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are less likely to be scared to read to an animal
- Pastoral approach: school pets can be used within Pastoral sessions to teach empathy and responsibility
- Reward: Children who have shown the Calton Values may also be rewarded with time with the school pets
- Walking, cleaning out the environment, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities that children will be allowed to undertake

3. Health and safety

- Children's parents or carers sign a consent form for the school pets. This will allow parents to indicate whether they give consent for their child to be in contact with school pets. Any allergies are also highlighted on CPOMS, which should alert us to allergies to other pets
- The likelihood of diseases being passed on from pet animals is low. However, allergic reactions to mammals, birds and animals cannot be discounted. These might result from handling the animals or being in close proximity and

be detected by the development of skin rashes, irritation to the eyes and nose or breathing difficulties

- Staff will 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 will have restricted access to those that may trigger a response
- Any cuts, open wounds or abrasions must be covered before handling of the animals
- Any injuries sustained to pupils or staff during looking after of the animal will be recorded as per the schools Medical Health and Wellbeing Policy
- When animals are handled, good hygiene will be practiced
- All animals to be kept away from staff and pupils faces
- In the event of an emergency evacuation, staff are directed to support the children in leaving the site as safely and efficiently as possible. When it is deemed safe to return to the building, an appropriate person will be assigned to check on the welfare of the animals. It is not policy for the animals to be evacuated in an emergency situation.

When handling animals:

- Children will not consume food or drink
- Children will wash their hands with soap and water before and directly after handling animals
- Any cuts, open wounds or abrasions must be covered before handling of the animals

4. Equal Opportunities:

All pupils will have opportunities to access the animals under the supervision of an adult. A pupil may not have contact with an animal if they pose a threat to the animal. It will be the Class Teacher's responsibility to encourage the pupil to have the right approach to animals.

5. Legislation and guidance:

This policy has due regard to current Government statutory legislation. We understand that we have a legal duty of care towards animals we are responsible for, and that this must be a priority at all times. Calton Primary and Calton Playgroup takes a zero tolerance to children who are intentionally unkind towards the animals. Such unkind behaviours, will result in the immediate action of the schools Relational Policy.