New Horizons
LEARNING CENTRE
Unlocking Potential through Learning

Animals in School Policy

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Policy responsibility - Pastoral Lead
Policy Location: Other
Signed by: Andy McLean

Position: Chair of Governors

Animals in School policy

New Horizons Learning Centre believes that working with animals provides unique learning opportunities. We recognise our responsibility to provide a safe environment, positive learning experiences for all pupils, and a high standard of care and welfare for all animals involved. This policy sets out how this will be achieved.

Our aims in bringing animals into the school 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, school staff, and their families.
3. To promote an interest in the natural environment and support hands-on learning across all curriculum areas.
4. To help pupils develop a calm, confident, and sensitive manner when interacting with animals.
5. To demonstrate best practices in the care of pets and other animals.
6. To encourage pupils to consider careers working with animals.

School pets and livestock:

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

- 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 animals themselves or find a suitable alternative home if the classroom situation or the health/ temperament of the animals changes and it is no longer appropriate for them to live at school.
- We will ensure there is a robust plan in place for the animal's weekend and holiday care.
- Wild caught and nocturnal animals will not be considered suitable for school pets.
- We will fully research the needs, habits, and temperament of the relevant species to ensure they will make an appropriate addition to the school and that we can fully meet their 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 animal care. 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 negatively impact local residents or the existing uses 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 will be acquired to ensure it has come from a reputable source. If appropriate, it will live at home with the staff member responsible for its care, or access to it will be restricted for quarantine and/or socialisation.

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

- We will provide housing of a suitable size with all the 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, it will be thoroughly cleaned and sterilised.
- We will keep the housing and surrounding area clean and in good condition at all times.
- 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.

Visiting animals:

Visits from domestic and exotic 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/insured as needed.
- Any animals on site will be safely and humanely restrained or contained when not being held by their owner/ handler.

Policies and procedures:

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