

Animals in School Policy



Policy developed by Mr Grogan (Headteacher) in consultation with Mrs Smith (School Business Manager): September 2026

Policy approved by Governors: October 2026

Ghona Taylor

Chair of Governors

Mr. Grogan

Headteacher

Policy shared with staff and shared on the school website: October 2026

'Never settle for less than your best'

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ANIMALS IN SCHOOL POLICY

Our school motto

Never settle for less than your best.

Our Vision

Following in the footsteps of Jesus, each member of our community will flourish as resilient, respectful and adaptable individuals prepared for life's journey. Along the way we will encourage and inspire each other to continue growing as beacons of light in our own lives and the wider world.

Our Mission Statement

St. George's Central seeks to provide quality education rooted in the Christian faith, serving the spiritual, moral, and educational needs of the community of which it is part.

Introduction

St. George's Central CE Primary School and Nursery understands that there are numerous ways that staff and children may encounter animals on the school premises, whether it be wild animals, peafowl, or animals brought to or kept at the school for educational purposes. St. George's Central CE Primary School and Nursery believes that keeping animals is an effective way of maximising the educational opportunity and attainment of our children. Whilst keeping animals at our school is particularly beneficial to our children, we understand that we have a legal duty of care towards any animals we are responsible for, and that this must be a priority at all times. This policy has been created in order to outline the key responsibilities and procedures for children and staff when looking after our animals, and to ensure the safety of our school community when dealing with wild animal encounters.

Legal framework

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 school policies:

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

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and monitored.
- Consulting the headteacher and staff animal handler on managing animal welfare.
- Ensuring that the staff animal handler puts effective measures in place to protect staff, children and the animals on the school's premises.

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The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school site remains free from any 'unwanted' animals.
- Conducting a risk assessment with the staff animal handler prior to the arrival of any animals to ensure all risks are manageable and controlled.

All staff members are responsible for:

- Supporting with any supervising needed when children interact with any visiting animals where necessary.
- Teaching pupils about the needs of the animals and how to handle and care for them where appropriate.

Duty of care

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 places a duty on schools to make provision for the welfare of any animal that they are responsible for.

Under this Act, the components of an animal's welfare include the need for:

- A suitable environment.
- A suitable diet e.g. food and fresh water.
- The ability to exhibit normal behaviour patterns.
- Suitable housing with, or away from, any other animals.
- Protection from pain, suffering and disease.

St. George's Central CE Primary and Nursery does not keep animals on site and children are not permitted to bring animals from home. Where animal-related educational experiences are provided through external visits or visitors to school, appropriate risk assessments, welfare considerations and supervision arrangements will be implemented.

Where animals are brought in for a short period, e.g. for a day, the key phase leader and School Business Manager will conduct a risk assessment prior to the arrival of any animals to ensure that all risks are manageable and are controlled.

An appropriate and detailed protocol will be implemented that ensures the wellbeing of the animal, and the health and safety of others, for the duration of its visit. This will include the provision of assurances from the owner as to the means of transporting and housing the animal, and the responsibility to bring any equipment, food or water likely to be required during the day.

There must always be adult supervision when children are in contact with animals. Children will be taught that they are not to handle any animals without adult supervision and permission.

The following considerations must be checked in advance of any such activities:

- The animal is used to being handled.
- The animal is not likely to be stressed by excitable children.
- Where there is a correct way to hold any animal, this is taught to pupils from the outset.

Supervising staff will ensure that good hygiene is maintained consistently throughout any handling of animals. While handling animals, pupils and staff must:

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

Children must be taught by staff the correct way to hold each animal.

Supervising staff will ensure that all individuals handling small mammals are aware of the importance of handling them carefully; the animals will be sufficiently restrained, so that they cannot damage themselves or the handler. Mammals will be handled daily where possible to ensure they become accustomed to being handled.

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

Handling small animals will always be carried out over a table or trough filled with a soft material such as sand/sawdust.

The handling of certain animals will be avoided altogether. Those which are nervous, nocturnal or prone to biting or scratching will only be observed and not touched.

Other creatures, such as invertebrates, can be too fragile to be handled any more than absolutely necessary. Sometimes any handling of an animal should be limited to a staff animal handler, who will have the necessary expertise to do it properly.

Animals will be given adequate rest periods away from disturbances.

Infestation and disease

All members of staff are responsible for identifying ill health of any animals on the school site and reporting any concerns to the School Business Manager and Headteacher.

The school is aware that, while the likelihood of diseases being passed on to humans from animals is low, some individuals, e.g. pregnant people and those with a weakened immune system, are at a greater risk of infection. In all cases, good hygiene practices will be observed to reduce the risks even further.

Children with known allergies to specific animals must 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, medical advice will be sought.

Where reptiles are on the school site, school will be aware that these animals can carry bacteria and will ensure that children under five will not have contact with such reptiles or the environment in which the reptiles live or exercise.

In any case of infestation or disease, appropriate treatment will be sought immediately and the animal(s) will be moved into a separate enclosure away from the others until they are back to full health.

If the animals are found to have any disease which is contagious to humans, the Headteacher will inform parents/carers immediately and the animal(s) will be removed from the premises for appropriate treatment.

Injuries sustained to children and staff

Any injuries sustained to pupils or staff during the looking after of the animals will be reported to the headteacher immediately and will be dealt with in accordance with the school's First Aid Policy.

All incidents will be reported using the animal incident log. Parents/carers of injured children will be notified of the injury as appropriate.

Animals in school

In addition to the general guidance given above, it is important that suitable arrangements are made in advance for the wellbeing of animals for the short time they are to be on the premises.

When a variety of animals will be together, the school will consider the possibility of unwanted interactions.

Animals must be housed properly and separately whilst on the premises and any containers used to transport them must be appropriate and retain the animal securely.

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Injured animals brought in by children

Children will be told not to attempt to rescue any injured animals found on or outside of school grounds by bringing them inside the school. Pupils will be instructed that attempts to retrieve 'abandoned' animals in this way may damage the animals concerned and spread infection, and that they should instead report the injury so that others can act appropriately.

Where a child brings an injured animal into school, the following procedure will be implemented:

- Appropriate precautions, such as quarantining the animal, will be taken to minimise the risk of transmission of disease or parasites
- Scrupulous standards of hygiene will be maintained
- In all cases of doubt, expert advice will be sought from either a vet, the RSPCA or the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA)

Unsuitable animals

Animals that present unacceptable risks must not be brought into the school.

Wild birds and mammals taken from the 'wild' will not be brought into the school directly as they may be harbouring diseases or parasites transmissible to humans.

Dangerous animals, as defined by the Dangerous Wild Animals (DWA) Act 1976, may not be brought into school. These animals may present a risk to pupils and staff, and there may also be welfare risks to the animals themselves.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the staff animal handler, in conjunction with the Headteacher, who will communicate any changes to all members of staff.

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Animal Incident Log

Date and time of incident:	
Reported by:	
Recorded by:	
Description of incident:	
Was property damaged?	
Were children or staff placed in danger or harm?	
Recommended actions:	

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