

GreenacreAcademyTrust
Skills for Life



Animals in School Policy

This policy has been approved by Directors and the Operations Board

Date Policy was created March 2018

Date of next renewal: March 2020

The Greenacre Academy Trust recognises that the presence of animals in our school can provide a valuable learning experience but animals cannot be allowed to endanger pupil safety or disrupt learning. For that reason, there should be a clear educational purpose for an animal to visit the school.

The Trust 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 Trust is particularly keen to support the introduction of service animals such as hearing dogs, therapy dogs or seeing dogs and this reflects the Trust's ethos of celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion.

Procedures

Animals brought to school for short term/day visits:

Before bringing an animal on to the school premises during school hours, staff and visitors must seek prior authorisation and a risk assessment carried out. Staff and visitors will obtain authorisation from the Head of School.

Staff or visitors must ensure that the animals are in good health and have had all the necessary immunisations or vaccinations. Where possible, evidence should be provided. Any animal brought to school must remain under control of the responsible adult at all times (member of staff the animal belongs to or the authorised visitor who wants to bring an animal in). The animal should be restrained on a lead (An exception would be made for dogs brought in to school for therapeutic purposes where the owner can demonstrate on going training and/or certification for the role) 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 member of staff/visitor. No wild animals or protected animals will be purposely brought to the building or on school grounds by anyone other than an authorised or licensed animal handler.

There will be no physical contact between the animal and pupils unless it is an integral part of the learning with prior approval received from the Head of School. Any phobias the pupils have will be addressed beforehand with the Class teacher.

Should any pupil or adult be scratched or bitten by an animal at school, first aid must be administered immediately and in the case of a pupil, parents will be called.

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 pupils 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 pupil when making decisions regarding the introduction of animals to the classroom. When there is a conflict in this area, the Head of School will confer with the staff member to find an agreeable solution to the matter in consultation with others, e.g. the parents and pupil, school and others as appropriate. If pupils 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 Trust Admin Manager.

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 pupils.

Guidance on bringing animals into School

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with pets. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with all animals.

Animals are often brought into schools from outside agencies, e.g. Guide Dogs for the Blind, as well as animal rescue charities such as the Cats Protection, Dogs Trust and occasionally by staff or visitors.

- Animals that are ill must not be brought into schools.
- Dogs with young puppies (those under the age of 8 weeks) must not be brought into school as there is the risk of the mother becoming overprotective, which may cause her to react out of character.
- Dogs must be kept on a lead at all times and under the full control and supervision of their owner (an exception would be made for dogs brought in to school for therapeutic purposes where the owner can demonstrate on going training and/or certification for the role) .
- Pupils must never be left alone with animals and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times – this should be the animal’s owner.

- Prior to the visit, pupils should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the specific animal. Pupils are likely to become excited and it is important that they react calmly and carefully around the animal.
- Pupils should be told never to go near or disturb an animal that is sleeping or eating.
- Pupils must not be allowed to play too roughly with the animal
- Consider the number of pupils who would be patting/stroking or meeting the animal. A large number of pupils could cause the animal to become nervous and agitated. On-going monitoring of the situation is vital.
- Pupils should not feed, or eat close to the animals.
- Pupils should always wash their hands after handling an animal.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Trustees have a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for animals in school.

Teachers and staff are required to abide by this policy.

The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance as and when required.

