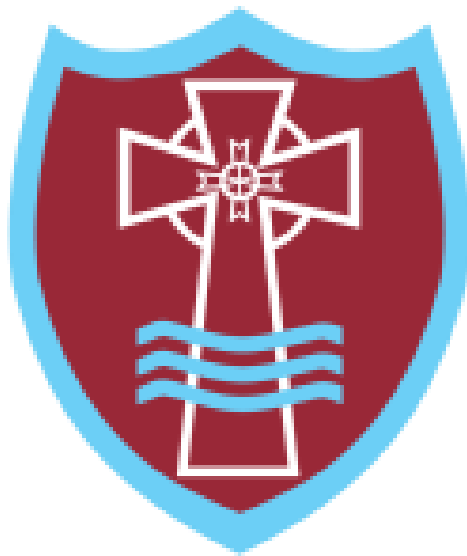


St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy



Handling and keeping animals in school Policy

Amended: September 2023

Review date: September 2025

Mission Statement

“Together we all enjoy learning, achieving, sharing and praying. Let Jesus’ love shine through in everything we do”

Our school vision statement

Here at St Aidan’s we are passionate about our children being happy, safe and healthy. We aim for children to learn in an inclusive, engaging environment; enabling them to be lifelong learners who know more, remember more and can do more in the wider world.

Policy for Handling/keeping animals in school

St Aidan’s Catholic Primary Academy recognises 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. The wellbeing and care of the animal should also be in line to ensure the best possible conditions for the animal.

The aims of keeping animals in the learning environment are to;

- Motivate pupils to learn, as children have a high level of natural interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment of animals.
- Embed Laudato Si in our school which allows children to care for the animals God created.
- Foster a sense of responsibility in children.
- Teach children to nurture and respect all living things.
- Lead to the development of hobbies / careers in animal care.

Classroom Pets:

Handling of Animals;

If animal will be handled, the most important issue is the maintenance of good hygiene.

When handling animals;

- Do not consume food or drink.
- Cover any open cuts or abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms with waterproof adhesive dressings.

- Wash your hands with soap and water before and directly after handling animals
- Keep animals away from the face.

Carefully handling of small animals and other animals is most important; the animals should be restrained sufficiently so that, they cannot damage themselves or the handler.

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

Diseases, parasites and allergies

The likelihood of diseases being passed on from pet animals is low. However allergic reactions to mammals, birds and a few other animals cannot be discounted. These might result from handling the animals or just from being near them and be detected by the development of skin rashes, irritation to the eyes and nose or breathing difficulties.

Hand washing soon after handling animals will help.

Teachers should 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 must, of course, 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, seek medical advice.

Salmonella bacteria may be carried by reptiles; good hygiene is again required, especially if aquatic reptiles such terrapins, are kept. Good general hygiene and hand washing are essential for risk reduction.

Children under five should not have contact with such reptiles or the environment in which the reptiles live or exercise.

In order for there to be minimal risk to humans of diseases being transmitted from animals kept in schools, it is important that animals are obtained from accredited or high-quality sources.

Unless these are known to have originated from a reliable source, it will not be possible to be confident that they are disease-free.

Animal Health:

If animals are not kept in scrupulously clean conditions, or come into contact with other animals from dubious sources, it will no longer be possible to guarantee that the animals will remain in a disease-free condition.

Holiday times, particularly in primary schools, can obviously create real difficulties. It is preferable that the animals remain at school and suitable arrangements made for their normal feeding, watering and cleaning. If, however, this is impossible and animals have to be taken out of school at holidays, they should **not** be sent home with pupils or other people unless all of the following considerations can be satisfied.

- It can be guaranteed that the animals will be looked after as well as usual.
- Whoever is caring for the animal must have all the necessary information, equipment, food, skills etc
- Steps will be taken to ensure that the school's animals will not to be able to come into contact with pet animals (Cats, dogs, rodents or other mammals).

Storage of animals overnight will be checked to make sure it is safe and secure, so the animal does not get out or other animals do not get in.

The environment and well being of the animals is monitored to ensure that no animal is distressed by classroom or school environment characteristics.

A folder of information for each animal will be kept including veterinary contact details and advice on recognising ill health in that species and any other important relevant information that is needed in order to keep the animal in good health.

Routine preventive health measures are sought and practised as advised by the vet – vaccination, flea prevention and worm control where appropriate. Veterinary care advice attached to each animals risk assessment.

Cleaning and Hygiene:

This is clearly important, both for the health of the animals and for those people looking after them. Hands should be washed before and, of course, after cleaning cages, tanks, etc. rubber or plastic gloves should preferably be worn.

After removing soiled litter material, cages should be scrubbed with hot water and liquid detergent.

As a general rule, this should be done at least every 7 days. Hamsters produce little urine; although mice, rats, guinea pigs and rabbits urinate in relatively large amounts. These animals should be cleaned at least once a week. Arrangements must be made for cages to be cleaned as regularly as normal at holiday times. Litter trays will be cleaned and fresh pallets placed in every second or third day.

Soiled litter should be placed in a strong plastic bag and placed with other waste in bins.

Storage of food:

Food needs to be stored in an airtight plastic container, to prevent rodents getting access to this and causing and infestation.

Occasionally other animals can be brought into school for special circumstances, Mrs Campling and class teacher will need to approve this and complete a risk assessment before it takes place. Any necessary precautions will need to be put in place by the class teacher and or owner of the pet to ensure the safety of the children and staff.

This policy has been agreed by:

..... *Kaupig*Date: September 2023

Headteacher

..... *T. Holden*Date: September 2023

Chair of Governors