



Animals on School Premises Policy

Revised: April 2024

To be reviewed: April 2027

Vision

We put children first, pioneering excellence and championing each and every child.

Statement of Intent

The Pioneer Academy recognises that the presence of animals at school can provide a valuable learning experience. The purpose of the Animals on School Premises Policy is to allow animals in the classroom while providing for the health and safety of the school staff, children and animals. The policy identifies categories of animals and the procedures to be followed in order to bring animals on school premises. It specifies conditions under which animals must be removed from school premises.

Aim

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

- Motivate children to think and to learn, as children 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 other children, parents and teachers
- Foster a sense of responsibility in children
- Teach children to nurture and respect life
- Lead to the development of hobbies/ careers in animal care
- Improve academic achievement

At Pioneer Academy schools, we aim to promote good practice in animal care. Children are taught correct procedures in handling and caring for animals; they are encouraged to take a shared responsibility for the care of the animals, under direct supervision. Children will be taught how to interact gently with our school pets whilst under adult supervision. These aims will be met by ensuring that the below procedures are followed:

Visit Categories

Animals Used in Educational Presentations (single event)

The visit organiser should complete a risk assessment (appendix B) which will:

- Identify the instructional purpose or social/emotional objective
- Provide a statement of the animal health & temperament **or** verify that the animal is part of a presentation conducted by an experienced animal handler who engages in demonstrations in a school setting on a regular basis
- Obtain approval to proceed with the visit
- Notify parents of the upcoming presentation (Parental consent may **not** be required i.e. Where Appendix C has previously been given to parents).
- Identify any modifications which may be required to meet the needs of the children who have animal fears or allergies

Cold Blooded Animals (Visits by snakes)

The visit organiser should complete a risk assessment (appendix B) which will:

- Identify the instructional purpose or social/emotional objective
- Provide a statement of the animal health & temperament **or** verify that the animal is part of a presentation conducted by an experienced animal handler who engages in demonstrations in a school setting on a regular basis
- Obtain approval to proceed with the visit
- Notify parents of the upcoming presentation (Parental consent may **not** be required i.e. Where Appendix C has previously been given to parents).
- Identify any modifications which may be required to meet the needs of the children who have animal fears or allergies

Classroom Animals

Before acquiring a classroom pet, the Class Teacher will investigate whether any child is:

- Allergic or sensitive to any particular species or their food or bedding materials
- Immune compromised, and therefore more susceptible to zoological illnesses
- The Class Teacher will provide parents and guardians with information about the classroom pet, the purpose of acquiring the animal (how its care will fit into the curriculum), and a plan for how any injuries (bites, scratches) will be managed should they arise. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from any involvement or handling of the animals if they wish

The visit organiser should complete a risk assessment (appendix B) which will:

- Identify instructional purpose or social/emotional objective
- Provide statement of animal health & temperament
- Obtain headteacher's signature of approval to proceed to next steps
- Provide modifications for children who have animal fears or allergies
- Obtain headteacher's final approval

- Ensure that each animal enjoys an optimum environment. We are aware that keeping opposite sex animals can lead to breeding and result in welfare problems. Where possible animals will be kept in same sex groups or pairs
- The environment and well being of the animals is monitored to ensure that no animal is distressed by classroom or school environment characteristics (e.g. noise, pupil behaviours)
- Routine preventive health measures are sought and practiced as advised by the vet – vaccination, flea prevention and worm control where appropriate. Veterinary care advice attached to each animals risk assessment
- Pets and their living areas are kept clean and safe at all times
- A high quality, appropriate diet is provided
- Children always wash hands after handling (See Health & Safety)
- Any sick animals are promptly isolated and examined by a vet
- Careful arrangements for holiday and weekend care are made, either with a member of staff or a vetted pupil's family
- Staff member follows procedures for cleaning and disinfecting sinks, cages and surfaces
- Staff member provides instruction for children on proper care and handling of animals

Equal Opportunities

All children will have opportunities to access the animals under the supervision of an adult. A child 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 children to have the right approach to animals.

Animals Excluded from School or Classroom Use

All poisonous and/or venomous animals.

Animals Exempt from Compliance with Policy

- Trained & certified service animals supporting individuals with disabilities
- Mini-beasts etc. investigated during field trips etc

Conditions requiring removal of an animal from school premises:

Injury: Any animal that causes injury to staff or children must be immediately isolated and removed from the school premises until the situation is resolved. An Accident Report must be completed and the appropriate medical care must be administered.

Health Issues: If a child or staff member has an allergic reaction or other health problem because of the presence of an animal, the animal must be immediately removed from the classroom/ workspace of the affected individual or removed from school premises until the situation is resolved.

Aggression: Any animal aggressively must be immediately isolated and removed from the school premises.

Policy for introducing an animal into the classroom.

- The teacher should become acquainted and comfortable with the needs, characteristics and temperament of the animal(s) before introducing it to the children. The teacher should share this information with the children.
- The animal should be provided with an enclosure of adequate size
- Children should be taught that the animal needs its own space, just as they do, and that their hands must stay out of the cage. If the animal is to be handled, it should be outside its cage, either in another container or in a designated area.
- Introducing an animal to a classroom is an opportunity to teach responsibility and empathy.
- Before an animal is made available for handling, children should quietly observe the animal's behaviour. Gradually introduce handling of the animal.
- Address such issues as allergies and fear about dealing with animals

Dear Parents or Carers

This letter is to inform you about animals that we have in school. Animals are used to help children learn about nature and the environment. They may visit school or they may be based in the classroom. Animals may be used in individual classrooms to increase children's interest in learning. Your child's teacher will have planned carefully and assessed risk to be sure that children and animals have a safe learning environment.

There is a consent form to sign at the bottom of this form, please complete this before your child starts school.

Some children have health problems when they are near animals. Children with allergies may get a runny nose, a scratchy throat, or have itchy eyes, ears or skin. Children with asthma may wheeze, cough or have chest tightness. Talk with your health care provider to decide whether classroom animals are a health problem for your child. Talk to your child's teachers if you have any concerns and ensure that you tell us about your child's allergies, asthma or other concerns you may have.

If necessary, changes can then be made in the ways animals are handled when your child is present. Animals may be removed at any time.

Head Teacher

Animal Policy Consent

Name of Child:.....

I give permission for my child to be involved in activities such as caring, stoking and feeding guinea pigs or any other animal introduced into school.

I have concerns about my child's health and/or safety or for other reasons I do not give my consent.

Parent/Carer Signature.....Date.....