

Animal and Pet Policy

1. Purpose

This policy provides clear guidance on the presence of animals—including staff-owned pets—on school premises. It aims to safeguard health and safety while recognizing the significant educational and emotional benefits animals can provide, especially for vulnerable students.

2. Rationale

- Animals in schools can:
- Reduce anxiety and stress among students and staff
- Improve attendance, engagement, and motivation, particularly for students with special educational needs or social-emotional challenges
- Support positive behaviour, empathy, and responsibility
- Enhance learning experiences through animal-related curriculum links

These benefits are particularly valuable for vulnerable pupils, including those with mental health needs, trauma histories, neurodivergence, or difficulty with social relationships.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all animals brought onto school property by staff, students, parents, or external visitors during school hours or school-sponsored events.

4. Approved Animal Categories

Animals permitted on school grounds fall into the following categories:

a) Service Animals

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Animals trained to assist individuals with disabilities, in compliance with the Equality Act 2010 where applicable.

b) Therapy Animals

Animals used as part of approved wellbeing or mental health support programmes. Must be certified through an accredited therapy animal organisation and risk-assessed.

c) Educational Animals

Animals brought in temporarily to support curriculum delivery or school-wide projects. This includes animals involved in lessons, science units, or wellbeing activities.

d) Classroom Pets

Animals kept in classrooms as part of a planned educational or wellbeing initiative. These require prior approval from leadership and clear care plans.

e) Staff Personal Pets

Staff may request to bring their own pets to school under conditions, outlined in Section 6.

5. General Requirements (All Animals)

Must be healthy, well-socialised, and have a history of non-aggressive behaviour

Must be fully vaccinated (if applicable) and regularly treated for parasites/worms or similar

Must be supervised at all times

Must not cause disruption or distress to students or staff

Must never be left unattended in classrooms or offices unless specifically approved

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6. Staff-Owned Pets

Staff members may request to bring personal pets to school, especially if:

The animal contributes to school wellbeing or therapeutic programmes

The pet has a calm, predictable temperament

There is a clear benefit to student support or staff wellbeing

Staff Pet Approval Process:

- Reason for bringing the animal
- Vaccination records
- Insurance confirmation (public liability where applicable)

Approval is subject to:

- Ongoing adherence to all school policies
- The school reserves the right to revoke approval at any time if issues arise.

7. Consideration of Allergies & Phobias

Teachers must consult with students prior to introducing animals to a classroom.

Reasonable adjustments must be made for students or staff with allergies, phobias, or cultural/religious sensitivities.

Alternatives or opt-outs must always be available.

8. Prohibited Animals

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The following are not permitted:

- Dangerous or exotic animals (e.g. venomous species, large reptiles)
- Animals not legally permitted in educational settings
- Animals with a history of aggression or unpredictability

9. Supervision & Welfare

Animals must always be under adult supervision.

Students must be instructed on safe and respectful handling.

Adequate handwashing facilities must be available and used after contact.

Classroom pets must have clearly assigned care routines (including holiday/weekend care).

10. Liability & Insurance

Owners (including staff) are fully responsible for their animal's care, control, and any resulting incidents.

Staff bringing animals must have suitable insurance where required.

11. Breach of Policy

Failure to follow this policy may result in:

- Immediate removal of the animal from school grounds
- Disciplinary action if appropriate



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Document Control

Issue No: 1

Issue date: June 2025

Review date: June 2025

- Review of permissions for animals on school site

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and updated as needed in consultation with staff and all other relevant stakeholders.