



SOHO PARISH PRIMARY POLICY

Pet Policy

Most recent review	December 2020	Next review due	December 2022
Governor committee responsible		Written by	Robyn Churchman

When cuddling a familiar adult, a hormone named Oxytocin is released into the bloodstream causing feelings of happiness and contentment. Research proves that stroking or cuddling an animal triggers the release of the same hormone, causing anxiety levels to decrease and the child to become more willing to socialise, therefore bringing a wide range of health and emotional benefits to both babies and children. Having a pet within the school benefits children's cognitive and language skills, encouraging qualities such as kindness, responsibility, sharing, loyalty and love.

Before having an animal within the setting, the school will ensure that:

- Letters will be given out to parents to obtain permission for their child to be involved in the care of an animal.
- Appropriate and secure housing will be purchased according to the animal, to keep them safe and contained and ensure the children's safety is maintained at all times.
- Any appropriate inoculations and treatments necessary, including veterinary health checks, must be given to the animal before any child comes into contact with them.
- Although children will be involved with caring for the animal it is important that any cleaning out of animals is done by staff only, who must do so using all necessary protective equipment, such as protective gloves and aprons.
- Any disposal of waste and equipment should be carried out immediately and in an appropriate manner.
- Any disinfectants and cleaning products used during cleaning the animals housing will be safe to be used in the presence of children, though it will not be used directly by them and will remain out of reach at all times.
- Children can help with the feeding routine and rebuilding of housing if appropriate. However, it is essential that they wash their hands thoroughly after coming into contact with the animal or any objects associated with the animal.
- Any stroking or handling of the animal must only take place when the staff are happy that the children and animals feel confident enough.
- All feeding equipment such as bowls, bottles etc will be cleaned and stored separately from human utensils in a suitable place out of children's reach to ensure their safety.
- Considerations and alternative arrangements will take place if necessary during the circumstances of another pet visiting the school or a child suffering from allergies attending.
- Should urine come into contact with the floor, this will be cleaned up using necessary cleaning products and equipment, to ensure that children are not exposed to it.

When handling animals, staff will ensure that children:

- 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 their hands with soap and water before and directly after handling animals
- keep animals away from the face

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.