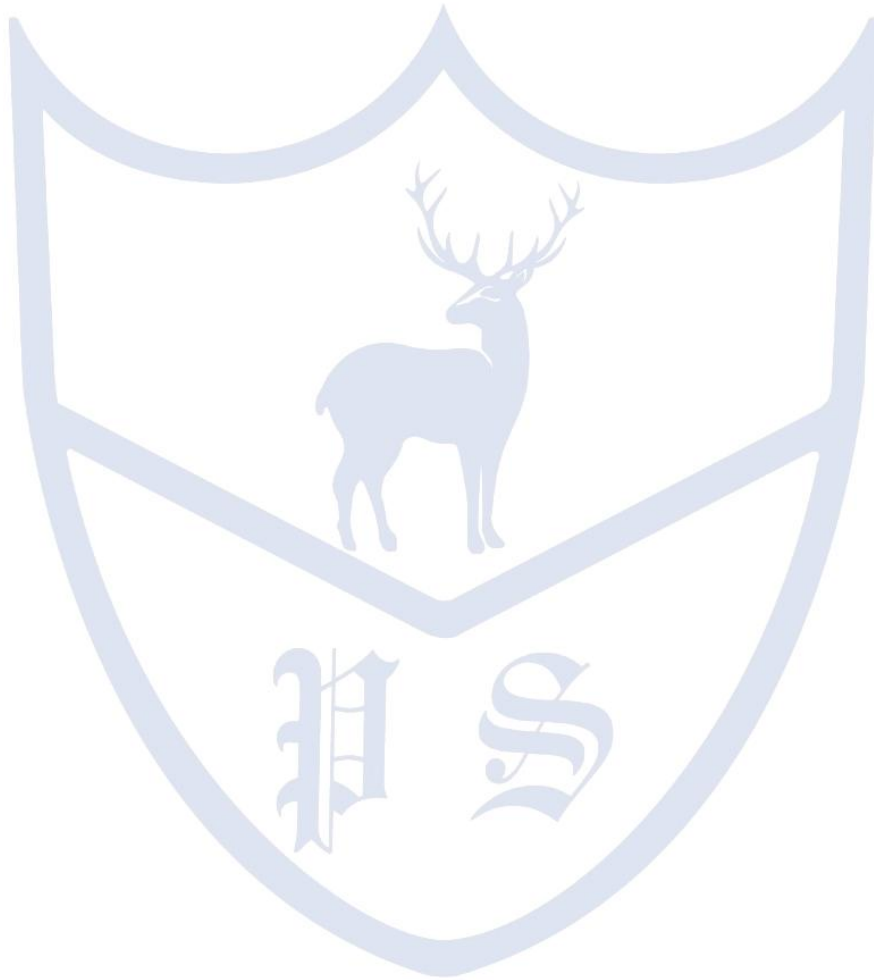


Animals on Site Policy

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Person(s) responsible for review and role:

Head of School: Nadia Ward

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ella Whitbread

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Aim of policy:

This policy sets out how the school ensures, at all times, that any animal brought onto, kept on, or encountered through school-led activities is managed in accordance with statutory guidance, the Independent School Standards and relevant best-practice guidance, so as to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and actively promote their wellbeing. Animal contact will only take place where it is purposeful, proportionate and risk-assessed, with suitable supervision, competent staff, hygiene and infection-control arrangements, safe premises controls, and due regard to the welfare needs of the animal. The school will make reasonable adjustments, including for assistance animals where required, while ensuring that individual needs and risks — such as allergy, phobia, bite or scratch risk, zoonotic disease, pupil vulnerability and animal stress — are identified, controlled and reviewed.

Related Guidance and School Policies

This policy outlines the arrangements for having animals on site as part of the schools core curriculum and wider enrichment but is not exhaustive in its scope and should be used in conjunction with the following policies, statutory guidance and advice:

Policies:

- *Accessibility Plan*
- *Administration of Medicines Plan*
- *Attendance Policy*

- *Catering Policy*
- *Controlled Medicines Policy*
- *Crisis Management Policy*
- *Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy*
- *Health & Safety Policy*
- *Infection Control & Illness Policy*
- *Parental Engagement & Communication Policy*
- *Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy*
- *Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Policy*
- *Visitors, Contractors & Site Security Policy*

Statutory & Regulatory Guidance:

- *KCSIE 2026*
- *Working together to safeguard children March 2026.*
- *Independent school standards guidance April 2026*
- *Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools April 2022.*
- *Health and safety on educational visits November 2018.*
- *First aid in schools, early years and colleges February 2022.*
- *Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school August 2017.*
- *Allergy safety in schools July 2026*
- *Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework September 2025.*
- *Standards for school premises March 2015.*
- *SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years September 2024.*
- *Equality Act 2010: advice for schools June 2018.*
- *Industry Code of Practice “Preventing or Controlling Ill Health from Animal Contact at Visitor Attractions” 2021*
- *RSPCA Education 2026*

Types of Animals

This policy sets out to cover all animals on site visiting for the purpose of curriculum coverage, enrichment or support with a specific need or disability. This includes any school pets, pupils therapy animals, pupils service animals and animals visiting the site belonging to external providers including farm animals.

In all circumstances any animal considered a dangerous wild animal (DWA), or requiring a DWA license to keep in the UK is strictly prohibited from visiting the site, even where they have been defanged in the case of venomous snakes or any other similar practice for venomous or poisonous animals.

Risk Assessments

There should be a specific risk assessment for each type of individual animal visiting the site outlining and considering:

- Any allergy risks
- Bite risks
- Zoonotic diseases that may be transferred
- Consideration to those with specific medical needs, immune disorders or high risk categories such as pregnancy
- Hygiene procedures including the cleaning and disposal of animal waste
- Escape risks and protocols
- Behavioural risks of both the animal and risks to the animal from students
- How the animals temperament will be continually assessed and monitored
- Supervision of the pupils and animal at all times, ratios based on the age of the pupils
- Transport to and from site considering the welfare of the animal
- Storage and suitable containment of the animal on site considering the welfare of the animal
- Provider credentials and evidence of suitable training for handling
- Provider public liability insurance specific to the animals to be brought on site

In all cases risk assessments for visiting animals must be signed off by the Headteacher. Where the animal is a service or therapy / assistance animal the risk assessment should be reviewed termly or more frequently if required to ensure the ongoing needs of the pupil and animal are met.

Therapy & Assistance Animals

Where the school uses therapy animals or a pupil wishes to use a therapy animal this must first be risk assessed. Where this is for a specific pupil a meeting should take place with the parents to set out clear expectations, guidance and boundaries as to the arrangements in place. Where a pupil wishes to use a therapy or assistance animal this request must be supported by a clinical physician or psychologist with arrangements and guidance set out in writing to be discussed with the school. The school will always look to support such requests where reasonably practicable and will work closely with parents to achieve a suitable outcome.

Service Animals

Where a pupil has a need that requires a guide or service animal, and the wider needs of the pupil can be met by the school in terms of access to the curriculum and site, the school will always welcome such requests. The school welcomes guide or assistance dogs that have completed official training in supporting the specific need and interacting in a positive and predictable manner with the public. The school will always make reasonable adjustments for pupils in line with the Equality Act 2010. As above this request must be supported by a clinical physician or psychologist with arrangements and guidance set out in writing to be discussed with the school. The school will always look to support such requests where reasonably practicable and will work closely with parents to achieve a suitable outcome.

Animals in the Early Years Settings

Additional support and provision should be in place where animals are brought into the Early Years settings, this includes increased supervision during handwashing after contact and during interactions with the animals. The welfare of the animals should also be continuously monitored with children encouraged to interact in a gentle and positive manner.

Health & Hygiene

In all cases the owner of the animal or proprietor of the activity is required before the visit or bringing the animal on site to provide written assurance and/or evidence of:

- Up to date and complete range of required vaccinations
- Up to date and regular worming treatments
- Up to date and regular flea treatments
- Veterinary certificates where applicable
- Evidence of registration with a specific veterinary clinic
- Disclosure of any prior incidents involving the specific animals
- Disclosure of any prior zoonotic diseases contracted by the animals
- Public liability insurance specifically covering the animals to be brought on site

There should be strict and clear arrangements and procedures in place as part of the full risk assessment as to how any animal waste will be disposed of and the area cleaned in a timely manner. Where the animal lives on site this should include a defined regular cleaning schedule in line with advice from the animals registered veterinary clinic.

Where there is interaction with animals the activity leader or class teacher should ensure there are adequate handwashing facilities with regular opportunities to use them. Where the animal is a service, therapy or assistance animal other pupils who may come into contact with them should be given appropriate training on safe and suitable interactions with the animal. For example recognising that the service animal is working and therefore should not be petted or interacted with in an unsuitable manner that distracts it from its primary task.

In all circumstances there should be no animals in food preparation areas.

Allergy & Phobia Management

As part of the risk assessment for any animal consultation should take place with the school nurse and appropriate member of the safeguarding team to assess any allergies or known phobias. To reduce the risk of unknown allergies and phobias parents should be informed of any visiting animals in advance with the option to identify any allergies and phobias well in advance. Where these are identified a meeting with the school nurse and activity leader should be arranged to discuss the adaptations required. Sessions interacting with animals should always be opt in rather than opt out with express and explicit written permission given by parents to participate.

Supervision

Children should never be left unsupervised with any animals, before any interactions clear expectations around the handling, noise levels of pupils and welfare of the animal should be explained to the pupils. Where animals are on site as therapy or assistance animals these sessions must be supervised by a member of staff, the member of staff should understand the purpose and arrangements for the session in addition to clear boundaries around safe handling.

Assessing Behaviour

Animals are inherently unpredictable and their behaviour should be closely monitored by staff at all times. Before any interaction with pupils the member of staff organising the activity, member of the SLT and owner or proprietor of the activity should discuss and observe the temperament of the animal. Any animal that appears nervous, aggressive or otherwise unpredictable is prohibited from being near pupils. The manner in which this will be assessed must be set out in the risk assessment, unless the staff member has recognised training in handling of such animals advice should be sought from a veterinarian or otherwise qualified professional as to indicators suggesting behaviour that would be unsuitable around children.

Similarly the welfare of the animals is paramount and pupils should be given explicit and clear instructions as to how to safely interact with the animal as to reduce undue stress and reduce risk of injury. Consideration should be given to regular breaks in quiet spaces for the animals to reduce over stimulation. Animals should have access to water at all times during the visit and be fed at regular suitable intervals if on site for prolonged periods.

- Registration with a veterinary practice within a suitable distance from the school should there be an emergency
- Any other requirements as set out in this policy

Insurance and Liability

Where animals are allowed on site the school should ensure that its public liability insurance covers these specific animals. This applies whether the animal is owned by the school, parent, pupil or activity provider. The school should also mandate that any other party bringing animals on site holds public liability insurance specifically relating to that animal.

Incident Reporting

Should there be an incident relating to any animal on site a full report should be written that contains:

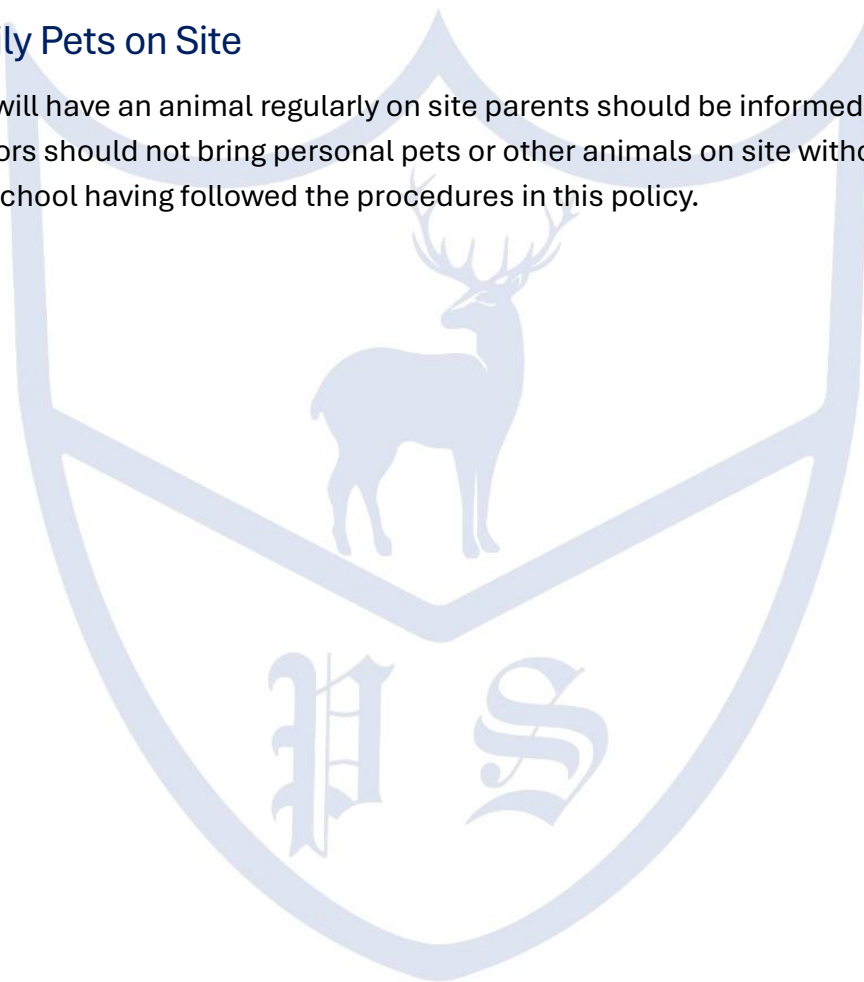
- The nature of the incident including the date and time it occurred
- The original risk assessment and evidence of suitability of the animal
- Evidence of liability insurance specific to the animal
- Evidence of the credentials of activity providers
- Statements as to the assessment of the temperament of the animal from the assessing members of staff

- A description of any injury caused such as bites, stings or scratches including any allergic reactions
- Specific learning points on review of the set out processes and arrangements

This document must then be shared with the SLT for review to then action any learning points and set out recommendations going forward. These incidents should be stored in a log and reviewed at least termly to ensure that procedures are adequate and fit for purpose.

Parents & Family Pets on Site

Where the school will have an animal regularly on site parents should be informed in writing. Parents and any other visitors should not bring personal pets or other animals on site without prior written agreement of the school having followed the procedures in this policy.



PARK SCHOOL