



TEALBY SCHOOL

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# Animals in School Policy

**Date Reviewed: May 2024**

**Next Review: May 2025**



## Context

Tealby School recognises that a visiting animal offers the potential for a very positive learning experience for children to learn about taking care and showing responsibility for animals as well as developing an understanding of the importance of the humane treatment of living creatures.

The school recognises that the presence of animals in our school can provide a valuable learning experience, but animals cannot be allowed to endanger child safety or disrupt learning. For that reason, there should be a clear purpose for an animal to visit the school.

It is the school's policy to notify children's families when an animal is being introduced into the classroom. The school is particularly keen to support the introduction of service animals such as hearing dogs, therapy dogs or seeing dogs and this reflects the school's ethos of celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion.

## Legislation

Tealby School is required to comply with all legislation including, but not limited to, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

These pieces of legislation establish the standards that must be met to ensure the health and safety of all employees and others (pupils, parents/carers and visitors) who may be affected by any school activity and are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive.



## Procedures

### Animals brought to school for short term/day visits

Before any animal is brought into the school building during school hours, prior authorisation will be sought from the Headteacher. Arrangements for animal visits will be made at least 72 hours in advance to ensure that families are appropriately notified. A letter will be sent to families explaining about the animal visit and asking families to advise the school of any allergies, or fears the children may have.

Any animal brought to school will remain under control of the responsible adult at all times. The owner will ensure that the animals are in good health and have had all the necessary immunisations or vaccinations.

There will be no physical contact between the animal and children unless it is an integral part of the learning, with prior parental approval received in advance by the Headteacher. Should any child or adult be scratched or bitten by an animal at school, first aid will be administered immediately and in the case of a child, families will be called. A copy of the incident report will be sent to the involved family and this policy will be reviewed accordingly.

Children will not have unsupervised access to any animal and will be taught how to behave around the animal and handle it safely. The school informs pupils that:

- They should not make sudden movements;
- They must ensure that they approach animals and interact with them gently and calmly;
- They should never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be interpreted as threatening by the dog;
- They should not put their face near animals;
- They should always approach animals standing up;
- They should never go near or disturb an animal that is sleeping or eating;
- They should not feed or eat close to animals;
- They should wash their hands after handling animals;
- Gaining permission before interaction with any animal should be instilled in children for all times.

## Children with Medical Concerns

It is the policy of the school to consider the safety, health and well-being of every child when making decisions regarding the introduction of animals to the classroom. Parents/Carers are responsible for advising the school of any allergies or health issues relating to their child. When there is a conflict in this area, the Headteacher will consult with others (e.g. the families, class teacher and others as appropriate) to find an agreeable solution to the matter.



## Responsibility

The owner or handler of any animal, including a service animal, is responsible for the animal at all times and must take full responsibility in the event of any harm accidentally or otherwise that befalls a child. A risk assessment will be completed by the Headteacher prior to the introduction of any animal in the classroom.

## The Care and Humane Treatment of Animals

Animals within the school will be handled, treated, and cared for in a humane manner. Enclosures will be appropriate to the animal and it is the responsibility of the staff member or owner to ensure that the animal has sufficient food, water and a comfortable environment to reduce the stress for the animal. Habitats will be maintained and the cleaning of them supervised by staff at all times.

## Families Bringing Dogs onto School Grounds

The governors and staff recognise that dogs are an important part of life for some of our families and, as such, are often included in day-to-day activities such as walking children to and from school. In our teaching we promote the relationship between people and their pets and accept and encourage the idea of pets as 'family members'. We see pet ownership as a valuable educational experience for children.

The school also acknowledges the views of families who have chosen not to have dogs or other pets. They also recognise that bringing dogs onto the premises might pose a health and safety risk to our children and others on site and could be unsettling for many as they arrive and leave school. There are added risks of dogs fouling, dogs biting or showing aggressive unpredictable behaviour.

Tealby School recognises that even well-behaved dogs can behave unpredictably when placed in an unfamiliar, busy, noisy and crowded school environment and that this can lead to unexpected behaviour in even the best-behaved pet. Children can also behave unpredictably when in the presence of dogs especially where they are not used to being with them.

Tealby School therefore requires all staff, families and any visitors intending to bring their dogs into the playground must adhere to this Code of Conduct which states:

- All visiting dogs must be on a lead that keeps the dog reasonably close to the adult who is control of them;
- No dogs accompanying children to and from school are allowed inside any school buildings unless they are an assistance dog;
- No dogs are allowed in the enclosed Class 1 area nor on the School Field at any time;



- Visiting dogs must not be left unsupervised on the school premises and must not be left in the sole care of anyone under the age of 18. No dog can be tied up and left unattended on or near the school site at any time;
- Dogs should be kept away from entryways so that children have a choice whether they want to come in direct contact with dogs;
- Owners must keep their dog away from other dogs within the grounds as it is not always possible to gauge how dogs can react towards each other;
- If any parent or child object to the animal's presence then arrangements must be made to ensure that this animal is kept away from them. If necessary, the animal may need exclusion from specific areas;
- The adult bringing the dog on site is responsible for cleaning up and removing from site any soiling by their dog on the school grounds. Failure to do so will mean the dog will no longer be allowed in the school grounds. Please note that dog waste must not be put into the school bins;
- All dogs coming onto School grounds must be properly vaccinated and treated for fleas and other parasites, regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other illness;
- Claws must be kept trimmed to reduce the risk of scratches;
- Pets that are ill should not be allowed in the school premises until their health is restored;
- Dogs with young puppies (those under the age of 8 weeks) must not be brought into school as there is the risk of the mother becoming overprotective, which may cause her to react out of character;
- Consideration should be given to the temperament and characteristics of the breed of dog being brought in, including its size and age. When bringing dogs on to the site, dog owners do so with an absolute understanding that their dog has no issues around children, has never displayed any aggression towards children or others and that the owner believes the dog is fully trustworthy in a school environment;
- It is understood that bringing dogs to school is a privilege not a right and is done at the absolute discretion of the Headteacher.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for Animals in School and will review this policy **annually**.

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy.

Teachers and staff and children are required to abide by this policy.