SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL
SINCE 1576

Animals in School Policy

(Prep School)

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Date: September 2025
Governor Approval: November 2025
Review date: September 2026

This Policy applies to Sutton Valence School (including, as the context requires, the Nursery and the Prep School).

Curriculum Intent

Sutton Valence Prep School wants all children to aspire to seek out challenging learning experiences together. We therefore believe that opportunities to work with animals provide unique opportunities for learning. We recognise our responsibility to provide a safe environment and positive learning experiences for all pupils and a high standard of care and welfare to all animals involved. This policy sets out how this will be achieved. It has been written with reference to the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and other relevant existing school policies.

Our aims in bringing animals into the school environment:

1. To help pupils develop increased respect, empathy and a sense of responsibility for living things.
2. To encourage pupils to consider the experiences and needs of other living things, including other pupils, school staff, and their families.
3. To promote an interest in the natural environment and support hands-on learning across all areas of the curriculum.
4. To help pupils develop a calm, confident, and sensitive manner when interacting with animals.
5. To demonstrate best practice in the care of pets and other animals.
6. To encourage pupils to consider careers working with animals.

School pets and livestock

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and animals, we will take the following measures before acquiring any school pets or livestock:

- Any member of staff wishing to introduce a class animal or animals must seek permission from the Head of Prep and agree to take on responsibility for the care and welfare of the animal for the duration of its life. This includes the responsibility to care for the animal themselves, or find a suitable alternative home if the classroom situation or the health / temperament of the animal means it is no longer appropriate for it to be at school.
- We will ensure there is a robust plan in place for weekend and holiday care of each animal.
- Wild and nocturnal animals will not be considered as suitable school pets.

- We always research the needs, habits and temperament of the relevant species to ensure they will make an appropriate addition to the School and that we can fully meet their welfare needs in the school.
- We maintain written risk assessments for all activities associated with keeping and caring for the animal(s). This document will identify one or more named members of staff who have agreed to take on responsibility for the care of the animal. This risk assessment process will consider the safety of any pupils with allergies, a compromised immune system, or phobic concerns. In the case of outdoor animals, we will take steps to ensure that they will not impact negatively impact on local residents or other users of the School.
- We will keep parents informed of the plans to introduce the animal(s) and ensure they know how to withdraw their child from activities related to the animal if they wish.
- We will assign a budget for the care of the animal(s) to ensure ongoing funding is available to provide a suitable level of care.
- If appropriate, animals will live at home with staff responsible for its care, or access to it will be restricted, for a period of quarantine and/or socialisation.

The animal(s) will only be introduced to the School once they have been assessed as safe and appropriate for the school environment, and SMT are confident that their needs can be met. Once the animal is resident in the School, we will take the following measures:

- We will provide housing of a suitable size with all necessary features and enrichments. The housing will be chosen with the safety of pupils in mind and checked for any unanticipated risks. If second-hand housing is used, then it will be thoroughly cleaned and sterilised.
- We will always keep the housing and surrounding area clean and in good condition.
- We will provide a suitable single-sex social group for the animal(s) if appropriate.
- We will provide the correct quantity of suitable feed. All feed will be stored correctly.
- We will carry out preventative health care measures as appropriate.
- We will ensure that any sick or injured animals are isolated, treated, and seen by a vet if necessary.
- We will monitor the behaviour and health of the animal on an ongoing basis.
- Pupils will only handle animals under close supervision from a member of staff.
- We require hand-washing procedures for all pupils encountering the animal(s) or associated equipment.

Visiting animals
Visits from domestic, exotic and farm animals can enrich learning. We will take the following measures to ensure any such visits are safe and humane:

- No animals will be brought onto the school premises without prior planning and approval from the Senior Management Team.
- We will produce a written risk assessment for all animal visits, considering the safety of any pupils with allergies, a compromised immune system, or behavioural issues.
- We will carefully check the credentials of any potential providers, requesting risk assessments, suitable public liability insurance, welfare policies and references as appropriate.
- We will require animal visit providers / owners / handlers to provide details of proposed contact between pupils and animals and assurance that all animals are vaccinated as needed.

- Except when being handled by pupils under close supervision from the handler, any animals on site will be safely and humanely restrained or contained when not being held by their owner / handler.

Policies and procedures

This policy, and any risk assessments and other documentation related to animals in School, will be reviewed and updated annually or in the event of a change to school circumstances or relevant legislation.