



Animals in School Policy

Includes COVID-19 pandemic addendum in red

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Governor's Committee Responsibility:

Resources

Date Approved:

Autumn 2020

Review Period:

3 yearly

Next Review Date:

Autumn 2023

The Limpsfield Grange Values:

At Limpsfield Grange we believe in working together to make a difference.

We are a tolerant community; we accept, value and understand others.

We care for all members of our community without judgement.

We are responsible for our own learning, behaviour and actions.

We accept that sometimes things go wrong. We work together to take responsibility for our mistakes and for putting things right.

We are a respectful community and we treat others as we would like to be treated, even if they have different views and opinions to our own.

We understand that good behaviour helps us to prepare for life beyond Limpsfield Grange.

We are positive and resilient. We celebrate difference in everything that we do.

We are all proud to be part of the Limpsfield Grange community.

July 2017

Limpsfield Grange School – Animals in School Policy

Background and rationale

The Animals in School policy aims to outline to students, staff, parents and carers, Governors and members of our wider school community how we work with animals for the benefit of the girls at Limpsfield Grange.

Research has shown that stroking or cuddling an animal triggers the release of the Oxytocin hormone which causes feelings of happiness and contentment. Anxiety levels decrease and children can become more willing to interact and communicate with people around them. The following learning, health and wellbeing benefits can be derived from working with animals:

- Animals can have a calming effect and can reduce levels of anxiety
- Students can become more motivated to think and learn as children generally have a high level of natural interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment of animals
- Students can develop a sense of responsibility through looking after animals
- Working with animals can teach students to nurture and respect life
- Working with animals can be pursued as a potential work or learning pathway for students
- Working with a Pets as Therapy animal may help students to improve their reading skills

Aims of the policy

- To ensure that students, staff, Governors, parents and carers and members of the wider community can work safely alongside the animals at Limpsfield Grange.
- To ensure that animals at Limpsfield Grange are well looked after and cared for.
- To ensure that this policy integrates with other associated policies such as the Dogs in School policy, and the Health and Safety policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all people who interact with the animals on the school site including students, staff, parents and carers, Governors, visitors, companies who hire our facilities and contractors.

The Limpsfield Grange smallholding

Limpsfield Grange believes that interaction with animals has a beneficial effect on our students and as such the smallholding was set up to allow this interaction. The smallholding and animals are an integral part of the education package at Limpsfield Grange and allow the students a calm and therapeutic place to go when life in the classroom becomes overwhelming. Goat and alpaca walking is very popular and is used as a therapy for those who appreciate the calming effect these animals have on them.

To comply with current regulations the school's smallholding is registered with Defra (Department for Environment and Rural Affairs), Animal Health, Trading Standards, and the Rural Payments Agency. The school has its own CHP (County Parish Holding) number, SBI (Single Business Identifier) and Vendor Number. These regulations apply when keeping cloven footed animals and only apply to chickens and ducks when the number kept is over 50 in number which is not the case at Limpsfield Grange.

The Premises Manager is registered as the Primary Contact when dealing with any of the above bodies and as such he must ensure all Animal Movement, Veterinary Medicine and Holding Registers are kept up to date.

All animal information and registers are kept in a file in the Premises Managers office.

Our animals

We currently have the following animals in the school grounds:

- Chickens
- Goats
- Alpacas
- Sheep

We have a 'Pet's as Therapy' dog in school each week which the students are encouraged to read to.

We also have five dogs belonging to members of staff in school on a daily basis and residential staff have both dogs and cats (dogs do not come into contact with students without supervision however the cats roam the grounds freely). The Headteacher must be consulted before any new animals are brought into school and may decide to seek further advice before allowing the animal to come onto the school site. We have a separate policy for dogs in school.

Caring for our animals

At Limpsfield Grange we aim to promote good practice in animal care. Our Premises Manager has a farming background and is experienced in animal care; he is responsible for the welfare of the school animals and supervises students contact with animals (except staff dogs). Students are encouraged to take a shared responsibility for the care of the animals, under supervision and are taught how to interact with them correctly. Animal related activities include:

- Daily egg collection
- Daily walking of staff members dogs
- Goat walking
- Alpaca walking
- Daily feeding of animals
- Reading to pets as therapy dog
- Outdoor learning lessons

All activities are supervised by a member of staff.

Handling animals

To ensure animals become used to humans they should be handled as often as possible, the more they are handled the more trusting they will become.

Only students with the appropriate parental consent are allowed to handle the animals.

Students should only handle any of the school animals when supervised by a member of staff.

When handling animals it is important that good hygiene is maintained.

When handling animals:

- No food and drink should be consumed.
- Any open cuts or abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms must be covered with waterproof adhesive dressings.
- Hands must be washed with soap and water or hand sanitizer before and directly after handling animals.
- Animals must be kept away from the face.

Careful handling of animals is most important and students are advised on how to approach the animals and how and where they should be touched. The animals should be restrained sufficiently so that they cannot damage themselves or the handler. Only suitably trained students should be allowed to walk the alpacas as they may “take flight” and may cause harm or damage to student accidentally.

For the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic it is the responsibility of students and staff to decide if they wish to touch the animals, this action carries a small amount of risk of virus contamination which they are personally responsible.

Diseases, parasites and allergies

The likelihood of diseases being passed on to humans from animals is low; however allergic reactions to animals cannot be discounted. They may result from handling the animals or just being near them and be detected by the development of skin rashes, irritation to the eyes and nose or breathing difficulties. The thorough washing of hands immediately after contact with an animal should help. A parental consent form is obtained prior to students being allowed to interact with the animals and school staff watch for the development of any allergic reactions in students who come into contact with our animals. Students with known allergic reactions to specific animals must have restricted access to those that may trigger a response. In most cases an allergic reaction will subside once the animal and the affected person are kept apart; in extreme cases medical advice would be sought.

In order for there to be minimal risk to humans of diseases being transmitted the school ensures that all animals are obtained from reputable sources.

School visitors

The goats, sheep and alpacas at the front of the school are accessible to visitors, notices requesting that visitors do not touch the animals are clearly displayed.

Risk Assessments

To minimize the likelihood of accidents or injuries risk assessments are carried out that cover all activities within the smallholding. As different types of animals have different levels and types of associated risk, and risk assessments are carried out for each species kept on the school site. School staff who bring their dogs in to school are responsible for carrying out a risk assessment which must be approved by the Headteacher prior to the animal being brought on site. If an animal has a history of biting or scratching it should not be brought on site.

Risk assessments are stored in the Premises Manager's office and reviewed annually or if there is an incident.

Animal health

The school is registered with a veterinary practice (currently Westpoint at Brasted Kent) who have records of all smallholding animals kept at the school. If an animal is showing signs of ill health and the premises manager feels it necessary a vet will be called out. If one of the smallholding animals dies it must be disposed of following the correct procedures as set out by DEFRA. If the animal died due to a suspected disease a vet must be called for advice and the smallholding area must be put into quarantine.

Appropriate and secure housing is purchased according to the animal, to keep them safe and contained and ensure that our students' safety is maintained at all times.

Animals are given any appropriate inoculations and treatments as necessary.

Although students are involved with caring for the animals, cleaning out of the animals is carried out by school staff using the necessary protective equipment. Any disinfectants and cleaning products used during cleaning the animals housing will be safe to be used in the presence of children, though chemicals will not be used directly by them and will be kept out of reach at all times.

All feeding equipment such as bowls, bottles etc. will be cleaned and stored separately from human utensils in a suitable place away from students.

Accidents

Due to the nature of the outdoor environment and the unpredictability of animals, occasional accidents or injuries are inevitable. Full risk assessments must be undertaken for both the day to day activities in the smallholding and all types of animals brought into the school grounds.

If an accident or incident occurs it must be reported immediately and an accident form completed. Following the accident/incident the risk assessment that covers the area must be reviewed and amended as necessary to decrease the chance of repetition. Should the same type of accident/incident reoccur a review of that activity should take place and changes made or the activity discontinued.

If an injury occurs that requires first aid a suitably trained member of staff will administer initial first aid. If it is thought that the injury requires more than first aid a visit to the doctors will be arranged or an ambulance called. If an animal is repeatedly aggressive or bites or kicks arrangements should be made for its removal from the school site.

Clothing and footwear

Correct clothing and footwear must be worn when undertaking activities with the animals or in the smallholding. Parents should supply students with wellington boots for use when it is wet or muddy, waterproof coats should be worn when it is raining. Gloves should be worn when helping in animal clubs or when cleaning animal building out.

Smallholding funding

The school provides an environment budget for animal feed, fencing, housing and vet bills. Fundraising activities such as animal adoption schemes, egg sales, and swimming pool café help support the environment budget. Grants are applied for whenever possible to help provide new animals or equipment.

This policy will be monitored through:

- The Site Manager observations of the small holdings
- Weekly Senior Leadership meetings
- Regular monitoring by the School Business Manager
- Headteacher reports to Governors (whenever necessary)

Related policies and documents:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy including COVID19 addendum
- Equalities Policy
- Dogs in School Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually, and additionally in the case of the following:

- Serious or frequent breaches of the Animals in School Policy
- New guidance from Defra (Department for Environment and Rural Affairs), Animal Health, Trading Standards
- Advice from the Police

The Governing Body of Limpsfield Grange School adopted this policy on:

It will be reviewed on:

Signed

Dated
