

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL POLICY

This policy is a ‘whole school’ policy and relates to both the senior school and the junior school (including the Early Years Foundation Stage).

Scope

This policy covers the management of school pets in Junior School classrooms, dogs on school grounds, and dogs which are pets of staff in school accommodation in so far as these interact with the rest of the school community. This policy does not cover the management of animals which are kept in the science laboratories.

School Aims in regard to the keeping of animals in school:

Class pets are a valuable part of life at the Junior School, where students are encouraged to observe, interact with and respect a variety of animals. At the Junior School, students are taught correct procedures in handling and caring for animals; they are encouraged to take a shared responsibility for the care of the animals, under direct supervision. Students will also be taught how to interact appropriately gently with animals whilst under adult supervision.

Arrangements in the senior school make the keeping of class pets inappropriate. There might be some animals kept as pets by resident boarding house staff; their management in the school, beyond the private accommodation areas, is subject to this policy.

This policy aims to take into consideration the needs and expectations of all members of the School community.

Further information on the value of animals in schools is included in Appendix 1. Please refer to Appendix 2 for specific guidance regarding dogs on site.

General Principles:

Animals have a role to play at the Junior School as ‘class pets’ and may also be resident in staff accommodation in Boarding Houses at the Senior School. They may also be present in other areas of the school for specific purposes (e.g. in the science department). No animal should be brought into a school building without the prior permission of the Head.

Any permitted ‘visiting animal’ must be kept under strict control; any permitted dog must be on a lead at all times.

No animal should be brought into the school grounds except on a lead.

No dog should be exercised on school playing fields.

Any decision to have a class pet will be made in consultation with the class teacher, who will seek permission from the Head, following the protocols below. The class teacher will take responsibility for the animal in term and holiday time.

Responsibilities of the teacher/boarding house staff:

- Prepare a risk assessment for any animal visiting the class for educational purposes or kept as a class pet
- Liaise with owners bringing permitted animals into school for educational purposes to ensure appropriate measures and facilities are in place
- Choose appropriate animals, having due regard for the age of the students in the class and the purpose for bringing the animals into school
- Ensure students are educated as to the safe way to interact with the animal
- Ensure that any class pet enjoys an optimum environment, in social groups, if appropriate
- Ensure that students and staff always wash hands before and after handling
- Have due regard to any student, staff or parent allergies or phobias
- Ensure that every animal brought into school is obtained from a reputable source and that its specific or generic behavioural traits are such that make it suitable to be in a school setting taking into account the level of interaction with students and the ages and characteristics of those students

It is expected that class pets will remain under the care and ownership of a named member of staff who is responsible for their care during weekends and holidays. The named staff member will be responsible for veterinary costs, pet insurance and the cost of food and bedding but such reasonable costs relating to the keeping or use of the animal at school can be claimed as an expense with the due authorisation of the Bursar.

Families who wish to take a class pet home in order to look after it (e.g. for a weekend) must request this, in writing, from the named member of staff responsible for that animal and must make time to speak to the named member of staff concerning the correct care of the animal.

The owner is expected to practise routine preventative health measures as advised by the vet - vaccination, flea and tick prevention and worm control where appropriate. They should keep animals and their quarters clean and safe at all times and provide the animal with a high quality, appropriate diet.

Responsibilities of the Headteacher:

- To approve the type and source of animals visiting school for educational purposes or kept as class pets
- To check that risks have been assessed, significant risks recorded and any appropriate safety measures are in place

Responsibilities of Students:

- Wash hands prior to and after handling any animal
- Behave sensibly, keeping to any agreed code of conduct

Responsibilities of owners bringing animals into school for educational purposes:

- To be in control of the animal at all times whilst on school premises
- To ensure they are made aware of any students with allergies or anxieties regarding the type of animal involved

- To ensure they have liaised with the class teacher concerning facilities and measures necessary for the visit
- To ensure they make students aware of behavioural expectations around the animal

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed:

- At such time as there are significant changes to guidance on animals in schools
- At such time as there are significant changes to the types of animals kept or visiting school
- If or when significant issues are brought to the attention of the Head of Bootham School or the Headteacher/class teacher at the junior school

Date written:	May 2015
Person responsible:	Head of Bootham School / Head of BJS
Review/Approval group:	Leadership Meeting
Date of next review:	May 2018

Appendix 1

RATIONALE FOR HAVING ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with animals. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with animals.

Studies show that encouraging children to take an interest in animals can have a positive effect on them and can be used to improve human and animal welfare as well as improving school attendance, motivation and attainment.

School pets have been found to:

- Enhance the learning environment, creating a sense of security and family warmth for the students
- Encourage the involvement of parents and the wider community in school activity
- Help to promote the school as an important nurturing influence in the community
- Motivate students to think and to learn, as children have a high level of natural interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment of animals
- Encourage a respect and reverence for life and thereby improve their social skills with other students, parents and teachers
- Foster a sense of responsibility in children
- Teach children to nurture and respect life
- Lead to the development of hobbies / careers in animal care
- Improve academic achievement
- Provide non-judgemental comfort to students experiencing emotional or communication difficulties

Whilst the School appreciates the positive attributes and values of animal ownership as an educational experience, it also acknowledges that there may be some members of staff, students, parents and visitors to the school for whom contact with some animals can be stressful, frightening or pose a threat to health. Such concerns should be brought to the attention of the class teacher or Head.

Further information on the value of animals in schools is available on request.

Appendix 2

SPECIFIC GUIDANCE REGARDING DOGS ON SITE

Pets, particularly dogs, are an important part of life for many families and are often included in day-to-day activities such as walking children to and from the school.

Parents and visitors (Senior and Junior Schools)

- Must remain in control of their dog at all times. Dogs should be kept on a lead
- Visiting dogs are not permitted within the school buildings or onto the Junior School or EYFS playground under any circumstance
- Visiting dogs which need to be tied up (e.g. so a child can be collected) should not be tied up close to the Nursery gate or main junior school entrance. Students must always be able to enter and leave school without having to be in close proximity to a visiting animal
- Any mess made should be cleared up promptly and disposed of off-site
- **Dogs are not to be exercised on the school fields**
- Dogs which exhibit frightening behaviour may be refused permission to be on-site, at the discretion of the Headteacher

Class and Boarding House Dogs

- Dogs owned by members of staff may only be brought into school with the permission of the Headteacher. Permission is not automatic and will depend on the needs of the school. Permission will always be revoked in the event of uncontrolled, aggressive or frightening behaviour by the dog
- Dogs should be fully vaccinated and insured and routine preventative health measures such as flea and tick prevention and worm control should be carried out as appropriate
- It is desirable for dogs and their owners to be approved under the PAT (Pets as Therapy) Scheme or similar
- Dogs are not permitted in 'communal' areas or food preparation areas- i.e. staff rooms, dining hall, toilets, kitchens
- Staff, visitors and students known to have allergic reactions to dogs are requested to inform the Head so that appropriate arrangements to protect the allergy sufferer can be made. The owner of the dog should take all reasonable steps to keep the dog away from the allergic person; they should not be expected to share a classroom space
- Whilst in the junior school, dogs should remain in the classroom of the owner unless invited to another space for a specific educational purpose.
- If the dog is ill s/he will not be allowed into school
- Dogs should be walked on a lead both in and around the school and be under the full control and supervision of an adult
- There must be appropriate adult supervision at all times when the dog is present with children

- Students should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around a dog. A code of conduct should be clearly visible in the classroom
- Children should not eat close to a dog
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately off-site
- Staff are expected to make their own judgement about the appropriateness or otherwise of the presence of dogs in the many different facets of a school's life. The following are examples of what should be considered:
 - any hazards that may be caused by the presence of an animal
 - the temperament of the dog
 - the risk of distraction (e.g. when driving)
 - the attitude of students and
 - whether individuals may be uncomfortable in the presence of animals or may suffer from allergies.
- Assistance dogs will be assessed and dealt with separately