

Animals in Academy Policy

St Giles and St Georges C of E Academy recognises that the presence of animals in our academy can provide a valuable learning experience, but animals cannot be allowed to endanger pupil safety or disrupt learning. For that reason, there should be a clear educational purpose for an animal to reside in or visit the academy.

The academy 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.

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

**Procedures**

*Animals brought to academy for short term/day visits:*

Before bringing an animal onto the academy premises during academy hours, staff and pupils must seek prior authorisation. Pupils must obtain permission from their class teacher; staff will obtain authorisation from the Headteacher.

Arrangements for animal visits should be made at least 48 hours in advance to ensure

that parents are appropriately notified. A letter must be sent to parents explaining about

the animal visit and asking families to advise the academy of any allergies, or fears the

children may have.

Staff or parents must ensure that the animals are in good health and have had all the

necessary immunisations or vaccinations. Where possible, evidence should be provided.

Any animal brought to academy must remain under control of the responsible adult at all times (member of staff the animal belongs to or the parent of the pupil who wants to bring an animal in). The animal should be restrained on a lead or in a suitable carrier. This applies to days when academy is in session, prior to the start of academy and for any time after the academy day, whenever the animal is on the academy premises. Transportation of animals to and from academy will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian or other adult.

No wild animals or protected animals will be purposely brought to the building or on academy grounds by anyone other than an authorised or licensed animal handler.

There will be no physical contact between the animal and pupils unless it is an integral

part of the learning with prior approval received from the Headteacher.

Should any pupil or adult be scratched or bitten by an animal at academy, first aid must be administered immediately and in the case of a pupil, parents will be called. A copy of the incident report (signed by the Headteacher) will be sent to the involved family and the policy for animals in academy will need to reviewed accordingly.

**Children with Medical Concerns**

Health issues must be considered when assessing the appropriateness of animals in the classroom. Prior to the consideration of the introduction of an animal to the classroom, the teacher should review the medical notes of the pupils in their class to ensure there is no conflict.

It is the policy of the academy to consider the safety, health and well-being of every pupil when making decisions regarding the introduction of animals to the classroom. When there is a conflict in this area, the Headteacher will confer with the staff member to find an agreeable solution to the matter in consultation with others, e.g. the parents and pupil, academy and others as appropriate. If pupils have petted an animal, it is essential that they wash their hands after the activity and that this is supervised to ensure that it is thorough.

**Responsibility**

The owner or handler of any animal, including a service animal, is responsible for the

animal at all times and must take responsibility in the event of any harm accidentally or

otherwise that befalls a child. All staff must complete a risk assessment form prior to the introduction of an animal in the classroom which must be signed off by the Headteacher.

**The Care and Humane Treatment of Animals**

Animals within the academy will be handled, treated, and cared for in a humane manner.

Enclosures must be appropriate to the animal and it is the responsibility of the staff

member to ensure that the animal has sufficient food, water and a comfortable

environment to reduce the stress for the animal. Habitats must be maintained and cleaned by staff, not pupils.

**Guidance on Bringing Dogs into Academy**

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of

responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with pets. In

addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with dogs and

puppies. As dogs are one of the most popular pets, it is more than likely that children will have some exposure to a dog while still at academy.

Additionally, dogs are often brought into academies from outside agencies, e.g. Guide Dogs for the Blind, as well as animal rescue charities such as the Dogs Trust and occasionally3 by pupils, parents or teachers. Only rarely does a dog bite without warning.

Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a academy environment? Of course there is, though there are a variety of accidents which can happen within the academy environment which far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by dogs. Therefore, it is just another risk that can be successfully managed. We should not lose sight of the fact that ‘nearly all biting accidents are preventable and very often depend on the behaviour of the child prior to the accident.

**Parents Bringing Dogs into Academy Grounds**

Parents are asked not to being dogs onto the academy grounds unless they are assistance dogs.

**Stray Dogs on Academy Property**

If there is a stray dog in your academy grounds, contact your local Council Dog Warden who will come and remove the dog from your academy. If you have a recurring problem with stray dogs on academy property, you should look at how your site is secured. Remedial work to perimeter fencing may help to reduce the problem.

**Dog Owner Walking or Exercising their Dog(s) in Academy Grounds**

Academy playing fields and playgrounds are private property and should not be used for the purposes of exercising dogs. In the first instance, if it is safe to do so, you should approach the dog owner and ask them to leave. If the practice continues or you feel unable to approach the dog owner, you should contact your Council Dog Warden or the police. If this is a particular problem for your academy, you should ensure that playing fields and/or the playground are inspected prior to use for evidence of dog fouling.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The Local Academy Committee have a responsibility to ensure that the academy has a written policy for pets and dogs in academy.

The Headteacher is responsible for developing this guidance into an academy policy and implementing it.

Teachers and staff are required to abide by this policy.