



## Pets Policy

Date Approved by Board	February 2024
Next Review Due	July 2024

APTCCO believes 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 of our learners, 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 Blue Cross – Pets in School guidance, our existing school policies, and relevant risk assessments.

### **Our aims in bringing animals into the school environment:**

1. To help learners develop increased respect, nurture, empathy, and a sense of responsibility for living things.
2. To encourage learners to consider the experiences and needs of other living things, including other learners, school staff, and their families.
3. To promote an interest in the natural environment and support hands-on learning across all areas of our curriculum.
4. To help learners 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 learners to consider careers working with animals.

### **School pets:**

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

- Any member of staff wishing to introduce a class animal or animals must seek permission from the head teacher 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 changes and it is no longer appropriate for it to live at school.
- We will ensure there is a robust plan in place for weekend and holiday care of the animals.
- Wild caught and nocturnal animals will not be considered as suitable for school pets.
- We will fully be researching the needs, habits, and temperament of the relevant species to ensure it will make an appropriate addition to the school and that we can fully meet its welfare needs in the school environment.

- We will produce a comprehensive written risk assessment for all activities associated with keeping and caring for the animals. 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 learners with allergies, a compromised immune system, or behavioural issues. In the case of outdoor animals, we will take steps to ensure that they will not impact negatively on residents or existing uses of the school grounds.
- We will confirm that a local vet will be able to treat the animals if needed.
- 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 animals to ensure ongoing funding is available to provide a suitable level of care.
- We will produce a written plan for how the animal will support our curriculum.
- We will research where the animal is to be acquired to ensure it has come from a reputable source. If appropriate it will live at home with the member of staff responsible for its care, or access to it will be restricted, for a period of quarantine and/or socialisation. The animal or animals will only be introduced to the school once they have been assessed as safe and appropriate for the classroom environment, and those involved 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 learners in mind and checked for any unanticipated risks. If secondhand 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 animals 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.
- Learners will only handle animals under close supervision from a member of staff.
- We will implement strict hand-washing procedures for all learners encountering the animal or associated equipment.

- Any cleaning chemicals or animal medications will be stored in accordance with our Health and Safety (COSHH) policy.

- We have a school dog, who stays at Sandy Lane, and goes home with her owner (one of our SEND Tutors) every night. The dog is familiar with and trained in the environment, she is well socialised and insured to be in school. The dog is kept under control and always supervised; she has a quiet place where she can choose to go for alone time (dogs like regular sleep and rest throughout the day). Like all dogs, she is well exercised, given a good diet and provided with enrichment to keep her happy. **We have a separate policy that relates specifically to dogs in school.**
- Our lead member of staff at APTCOO, for pet care, is Ruth Kellett.
- We have detailed risk assessments in place for all of our pets in school.
- All of our pets have up to date health certificates.

APTCOO ensure that they have large, spacious homes, there are lots of things to do to enrich their environment and help keep them stimulated and happy.

Policy/ procedure for: Pets

**RECORD OF CHANGES**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>DETAILS OF CHANGE</b>
July 2023	Compliance Lead	Creation of V1 policy

**EMPLOYEE RECORD OF HAVING READ THE POLICY**

**Title of Policy:** Pets

I have read and understand the principles contained in the named policy.

<b>PRINT FULL NAME</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>