

'...those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.' Isaiah 40:31



Animals in School Policy

St Laurence in Thanet Church of England Junior Academy

(Multi Academy Trust Policy)



Our school offers a supportive, inclusive, nurturing and inspiring learning environment where each member is known by God, loved and empowered to reach their full potential. Children are encouraged through an aspirational and engaging curriculum to develop their knowledge, skills and character so that they can truly flourish, both now and into the future.

This set of values is reflected in all our policies.

Joy Hope Forgiveness Love Resilience

Date of Review: January 2026

Approved by: S Graham

Date: 15.1.2026

Date of Next Review: January 2029

St Laurence CE Junior Academy recognises that the presence of animals in our school 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 visit the school.

The school 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.

Procedures - Animals brought to school for short term/day visits.

Before bringing an animal onto the school premises during school hours, prior authorisation must be sought 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 will be sent to parents explaining about the animal visit and asking families to advise the school of any allergies, or fears the children may have. A risk assessment should be carried out prior to the visit of any animal into the classroom. Consideration should be given to the temperament and characteristics of the animal being brought in.

Owners 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 school must remain under control of the responsible adult at all times. The animal should be restrained on a lead or in a suitable carrier. This applies to days when school is in session, prior to the start of school and for any time after the school day, whenever the animal is on the school premises.

No wild animals or protected animals will be purposely brought to the building or on school 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 school, first aid must be administered immediately and in the case of a pupil, parents will be called. The policy for animals in school will need to be 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 school to consider the safety, health and well-being of every pupil when making decisions regarding the introduction of animals to the classroom. 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 school 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 owner to ensure that the animal has sufficient food, water and a comfortable environment to reduce the stress for the animal.

Parents Bringing Dogs into School Grounds

Dogs are an important part of family life for many in the school community, and as such are often included in day-to-day activities such as walking children to and from school. However, others may find the presence of dogs in the playground and school grounds stressful, even frightening particularly with younger children, and even well-behaved dogs can behave unpredictably when placed in a busy, noisy and crowded environment. **Consequently, dogs are not permitted within the school grounds.** The school's priority is the safeguarding of its children and staff. This information should be circulated to parents through a newsletter or through the school website. The only exception to this is if they are working guide dogs.

Stray Dogs on School Property

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

Dog Owner Walking or Exercising their Dog(s) in School Grounds

School playing fields and playgrounds are private property and should not be used for the purposes of exercising dogs.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governors have a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for pets and dogs in school. The Headteacher is responsible for developing this guidance into a school policy and implementing it. Teachers and staff are required to abide by this policy. The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance as and when required.