



Animals in the setting

Children learn about the natural world, its animals and other living creatures, as part of the Learning and Development Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This may include contact with animals, or other living creatures, either in the setting or on visits. St Marks Pre-school aims to ensure that this is in accordance with sensible hygiene and safety controls.

If the pre-school decides to take on an animal or a creature to keep as a pet in the setting, the pre-school will:

- Take into account the views of parents and children when selecting which animal or creature to keep, as well as any allergies or issues that individual children may have.
- Carry out a risk assessment with a knowledgeable person accounting for any hygiene or safety risks posed by the animal or creature.
- Provide suitable housing for the animal or creature and ensure this is cleaned out regularly and is kept safely.
- Ensure that the practitioner team are knowledgeable about the pet's welfare and dietary needs and ensure that the correct food is offered, at the right times.
- Make arrangements for weekend and holiday care for the animal or creature.
- Register with the local vet and take out appropriate pet care health insurance.
- Make sure all vaccinations and other regular health measures, such as de-worming, are up-to-date and recorded.
- Teach children the correct handling and care of the animal or creature and supervise them at all times.
- Ensure that children wash their hands after handling the animal or creature and do not have contact with animal soil or soiled bedding.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning housing or handling soiled bedding.
- Ensure that if animals or creatures are brought in by visitors to show the children, they are the responsibility of their owner, and that the owner carries out a risk assessment, detailing how the animal or creature is to be handled and how any safety or hygiene issues will be addressed.

Visits to farms

- Before a visit to a farm, the Pre-school Manager/Room Leader carries out a risk assessment - this may take account of safety factors listed in the farm's own risk assessment, which will be viewed.

- The Pre-school Manager makes contact with the venue in advance of the visit to ensure that there has been no recent outbreak of E.coli or other infections. If there has been an outbreak, the pre-school will review the visit and may decide to postpone it.
- The pre-school practitioner team follow the pre-school outings procedure.
- Children wash and dry their hands thoroughly after contact with animals.
- Outdoor footwear worn to visit farms is cleaned of mud and debris as soon as possible on departure and should not be worn indoors.
- The pre-school will advise practitioners and volunteers who are, or may be, pregnant to avoid contact with ewes and to consult their GP before the visit.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the pre-school held on (date)

Signed on behalf of the pre-school

Also see: Health and Safety

Managing Children Who are Sick, Infectious, or With Allergies