

## Animal Health and Safety

At Waltham Preschool we recognise the value animals/pets can bring to the emotional needs of children and adults. Caring for animals/pets also gives children the opportunity to learn how to be gentle and responsible for others and supports their learning and development.

### **Preschool Pets**

Our safety procedures are:

- Permission slips are obtained from parents to seek written permission for their child to be involved in caring for the animal at preschool.
- A full documented risk assessment is completed, including considerations for children with any allergies.
- Only staff have responsibility for cleaning out the animals (where applicable).
- We ensure all pets have had all of their relevant vaccinations, are registered with the vet and are child-friendly.
- Pets are not allowed near food, dishes, worktops or food preparation areas. Children will wash their hands with soap and water after handling animals, and will be encouraged not to place their hands in their mouths while pets are being handled. Staff explain the importance of this to the children
- Children are encouraged to leave their comforters and dummies away from the animals to ensure cross-contamination is limited.

### **Visits to farms**

- A site visit is made by a senior member of staff before an outing to a farm can be arranged.
- We check that the farm has suitable washing facilities, appropriately signposted, with running water, soap and disposable towels or hot air hand dryers. Any portable water taps should be appropriately designed in a suitable area.
- We ensure that there is an adequate number of adults to supervise the children, considering the age and stage of development of the children.
- We check that the farm is well-managed, that the grounds and public areas are as clean as possible and that suitable first aid arrangements are in place.
- We ensure suitable precautions are in place where appropriate e.g. in restricted areas such as near slurry pits or where animals are isolated.

During the visit

- If children are in contact with, or feeding animals, we will warn them not to place their faces against the animals or put their hands in their own mouths afterwards, and explain why.

- We will encourage children to leave comforters (e.g. soft toys and blankets) and dummies either at preschool, in the transport used or in a bag carried by a member of staff to ensure cross-contamination is limited.
- After contact with animals and particularly before eating and drinking, we will ensure all children, staff and volunteers wash and dry their hands thoroughly. If young children are in the group, hand washing will be supervised. We will always explain why the children need to do this.
- Meals, breaks or snacks will be taken well away from the areas where animals are kept and children will be warned not to eat anything which has fallen on the ground.
- We will ensure children do not consume unpasteurised produce, e.g. milk or cheese.
- Animals should be prohibited from any outdoor picnic areas.
- We will ensure all children, staff and volunteers wash their hands thoroughly before departure
- We will ensure footwear and clothing is as free as possible from faecal materials.