



## **Pet Policy**

We believe that contact with animals and caring for them increases children's awareness of the interdependence of creatures, humans and the physical environment, and is beneficial to the children. Considering the needs of another is one of the building blocks of empathy and learning to talk about feelings and emotions is also an important skill. As our lives become busier some families are unable to keep pets and having a pet at pre-school allows all children to benefit.

### **Animal Awareness**

The nursery recognises the value and importance of children seeing and having access to pets.

The benefits do not come about by magic, however. Keeping animals in nursery settings has potential dangers, but these can be eliminated with planned risk management and careful behaviour control.

Firstly, children and carers alike must realise that cartoon animals are fantasy; in educational environments, all pets must be taught how to act around children, and all children must be taught how to act around animals. Practitioners must teach children how to act in a controlled manner and how to control the mannerly animals and should use treat-reward training for the pets to appropriately approach the children.

### **Value and benefits of pets:**

We recognise that the provision of pets within the setting provides children with a wealth of learning opportunities regarding what animals need to live and thrive and the importance of taking care of them throughout the year.

The pre-school has one pet: Horace our black Labrador born 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021. Horace lives in the family home at Pillarwood Farm which is on site to Pillarwood Farm Pre-School. Horace visits pre-school regularly for care and cuddles.

### Health and Hygiene

Staff are fully aware of the importance of health and hygiene when children are in contact with Horace

Staff guide and monitor that children do not put their hands near their faces when they have been in contact with Horace or pet foods until they have washed their hands.

Staff ALWAYS ensure that ALL children wash their HANDS very well after touching or handling Horace or pet food in the pre-school.

Horace is registered with a local vet and will not visit the setting if unwell

Horace is flea'd and wormed regularly in line with vet instructions

Horace will not be encouraged to use the setting for toileting

### Safety

Staff are also aware of safety issues and ensure that children only come into contact with safe pets and are closely supervised at all times.

### Risk Assessments

The setting has a risk assessment to ensure that all necessary precautions are taken to prevent accident, injury or the spread of infection, including hand washing using sterilising gel and the avoidance of children putting hands and fingers in their mouths.

### Permissions:

At enrolment parents are asked if they give permission for their child to have contact with Horace in the pre-school setting environment and if the child has any allergies to animals. If a child has allergies or permission not given Horace will not visit the setting when that child is present.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Policy review date March 2023:

Signed: D T Hawes. Owner

