



education
partners in learning

Education and animals



Guidance for educational establishments in England and Wales

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Introduction

RSPCA policies*

The RSPCA is opposed to the use of animals for education where distress or suffering is likely to be caused.

The RSPCA strongly discourages the keeping of animals in schools.

- The RSPCA believes that animal welfare can be taught in schools without keeping animals captive. Studying an animal in its natural environment should aim to cause minimal disturbance whilst maximising educational opportunity.
- The RSPCA believes that there must be an explicit animal welfare education rationale for using animals in education, and legislation relating to animals must be considered in the development of programmes of study.
- The RSPCA believes that animals should not be kept in educational establishments except when the use of alternatives is impossible.
- The RSPCA believes that animal welfare education is an entitlement to all. The prevention of cruelty and promotion of kindness to animals can best be achieved through both formal and non-formal educational activities.

1. 'Duty of care'

As a result of the new Animal Welfare Act 2006, management and staff at educational establishments now have a legal 'duty of care' to ensure that proper provision is made for the welfare needs of any vertebrate animal for which they are responsible. This applies not only during term time but also during the holidays.

The Act says that the welfare needs of an animal include:

- its need for a suitable environment
- its need for a suitable diet
- its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals and
- its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

This list provides a basic welfare checklist for classroom pets, 'school' farm animals, pets brought into educational establishments by children/young people (e.g. pet shows, pet assemblies) and by other visitors.

Animals that might be taken into schools should be carefully selected to ensure that the experience is not likely to be fearful. They should remain in the presence of their owner/trainer during the visit, and leave the school premises as soon as their educational purpose has been fulfilled. If an animal shows signs of fear or distress it should be removed from the source of the fear immediately.

The 'duty of care' applies to any person who is:

- the owner of the animal
- in charge of the animal or
- a parent or guardian of a person under 16 who is responsible for the animal.

A person can be responsible for an animal on a temporary basis, for example, a supply teacher temporarily in charge of a classroom pet or a person looking after a classroom pet during the holidays.

More than one person can be legally responsible for an animal at any one time.

Anyone who is cruel to an animal or does not provide for its welfare may be banned from owning animals, fined up to £20,000 and/or be sent to prison.

Purpose of this guidance

The interpretation of the welfare needs in this booklet is not the only possible interpretation of the 'duty of care' and cannot be relied upon as representing the interpretation that a court would take in any particular case.

This booklet is not intended to be veterinary or legal advice but merely guidance to management and staff at educational establishments on:

- the new responsibilities created by the Animal Welfare Act 2006
- RSPCA policies on education and animals, and
- how to be an 'animal-friendly' educational establishment.

For the purpose of this guidance, 'education establishment' refers to any establishment that is responsible for providing education for children and young people up to and including the age of 16, e.g. nurseries, schools, specialist schools and academies.

Welfare needs of classroom pets

The RSPCA strongly discourages the keeping of animals in schools.*

- Schools can be noisy and frightening places for some animals and it is very difficult to look after any animal's needs in a classroom environment. This applies to all animals, including African land snails and fish.
- The RSPCA believes that animal welfare can be taught in schools without keeping animals captive. Studying an animal in its natural environment should aim to cause minimal disturbance whilst maximising educational opportunity.
- The RSPCA believes that there must be an explicit animal welfare education rationale for using animals in education, and legislation relating to animals must be considered in the development of programmes of study.
- Where animals are kept in schools proper provision should be made for their physical and mental wellbeing.

Any staff responsible for classroom pets must ensure that the needs of these animals are met.

This includes ensuring that the animal has:

- **Accommodation that is appropriate to the animal and its size**
For example, should the animal:
 - ✓ be given access outside as well as inside and/or somewhere protected from the cold?
 - ✓ be protected from predators?
 - ✓ have special sleeping arrangements?
 - ✓ have clean accommodation? How often should this be cleaned?
 - ✓ be kept out of direct sunlight?

- ✓ have extra light and heating?
- ✓ have a large enclosure as it grows bigger?

- **Suitable food and fresh water**

For example, should the animal:

- ✓ be fed once or twice a day?
- ✓ receive a balanced and nutritious diet?
What is this?
- ✓ be fed live food?
- ✓ have a constant supply of fresh, clean drinking water?

- **Freedom to exhibit normal behaviour patterns**

For example, should the animal:

- ✓ be handled during the day?
- ✓ have access to bathing water?
- ✓ have a gnawing block?
- ✓ have daily exercise? How can this be facilitated?
- ✓ have toys and, if so, which toys?



- **Suitable companionship**

For example, should the animal:

- ✓ be kept alone?
- ✓ have the companionship of its own species?
- ✓ be kept separate from some other species of pets?

- **Protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease**

For example, should the animal:

- ✓ be regularly brushed?
- ✓ have injections to prevent serious diseases?
- ✓ be neutered?
- ✓ be checked by a vet? What are the signs of ill health?

Someone with responsibility for the animal should be able to recognise signs of ill health or injury and have the authority and resources to seek immediate veterinary advice. This can be expensive, especially if the animal needs in-patient treatment at the veterinary surgery. Consideration also needs to be given as to how the animal can be provided with any necessary treatments, especially over weekends and holidays.

Before acquiring an animal, consider how long the animal is likely to live as this may be longer than appreciated. For example, guinea pigs may live up to seven years, budgies up to 10 years, goldfish up to 25 years, terrapins up to 30 years and tortoises for more than 50 years.

The RSPCA also recommends that:

- a named person is responsible for the welfare and husbandry of the animals at all times

- any contact between children/young people and animals is supervised and controlled
- the animals are given adequate 'rest' periods away from disturbance
- the animal's lifestyle (according to its species) fits with the academic day, and
- any animals kept are prevented from indiscriminate breeding.

The scope of the education establishment's responsibility in any particular case will vary according to the circumstances of the individual animal.

The RSPCA website has more detailed information on caring for pets. Visit www.rspca.org.uk/petcare

Welfare needs of farm animals

The RSPCA strongly discourages the keeping of animals in schools.*

- Schools can be noisy and frightening places for some animals and it is very difficult to look after any animal's needs in a classroom environment. This applies to all animals, including African land snails and fish.
- The RSPCA believes that animal welfare can be taught in schools without keeping animals captive. Studying an animal in its natural environment should aim to cause minimal disturbance whilst maximising educational opportunity.
- The RSPCA believes that there must be an explicit animal welfare education rationale for using animals in education, and legislation relating to animals must be considered in the development of programmes of study.
- Where animals are kept in schools proper provision should be made for their physical and mental wellbeing.

Giving young people access to farms is potentially a good way of teaching them about farm animals and where their food comes from. This visit should be part of a scheme of work that explores the relationship between animal welfare and farming. However, in many cases educational environments may not be ideal for keeping farm animals.

Management and staff at educational establishments have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to ensure the welfare needs of farm animals for which they are responsible are met. There are also some human health and safety issues that educational establishments need to consider.

Some of the issues include:

A suitable environment

Educational establishments should only consider keeping farm animals if they have suitable housing/fields for keeping the animals away from the noisy educational environment. This should include:

Shelter/shade

- ✓ All farm animals, including poultry, must have access to a suitable shelter at all times, which must be large enough to accommodate all the animals together. It should be constructed and insulated to give proper protection against extremes of weather (both cold/wet and hot).
- ✓ All buildings/shelters should be adequately ventilated, but animals should be protected from draughts.
- ✓ Pigs must have access to wallows (muddy pools) and/or other means of keeping cool in hot weather.
- ✓ Ducks must have access to water in which to dip their heads and to bathe. This needs to be kept clean to prevent infection and disease.

Space allowance

- ✓ This will vary according to the species, age and breed of farm animals being kept.

- ✓ All animals must have access to a comfortable solid-based lying area, with plenty of suitable bedding material. It should be replaced/replenished regularly to ensure that it remains dry.
- ✓ The lying area should be large enough to accommodate all animals together lying in a stretched-out position.
- ✓ Animals must have access to a suitable area for exercise, with enough space to ensure that they can move around freely and express their natural behaviour patterns.
- ✓ Poultry must have access to suitable perches/roosting areas and, in the case of laying birds, quiet nesting sites/boxes.
- ✓ Specific recommendations for space allowances for each species should be sought from relevant agricultural/welfare organisations.

Flooring

- ✓ This must be appropriate for the age/species of farm animal being kept.
- ✓ The ground must not be too hard or abrasive, or at all slippery, and must be kept in a good state of repair to ensure that no injuries are caused to the animals' feet.

Bedding

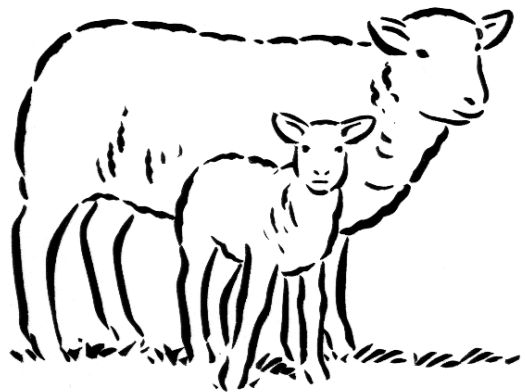
- ✓ All mammals must have access to appropriate clean, dry bedding such as straw, supplied in enough quantities to provide a comfortable lying surface.
- ✓ The ground must not be too hard or abrasive, or at all slippery, and must be kept in a good state of repair to ensure that no injuries are caused to the animals' feet.

Fencing

- ✓ This must be strong enough to contain the species in question, must be frequently inspected and properly maintained, and must not have the potential to cause injury to the animals.

Suitable food and fresh water

- The type and quantity of food required varies not only with species, but also with age, stage of production (e.g. lactating females have different requirements from other adults) and breed.
- The dietary requirements of each type of animal must be ascertained by consulting a vet or a livestock nutrition consultant.
- All animals must have continuous access to a supply of clean, fresh drinking water.
- Troughs and other containers must be suitable for the animals using them (e.g. the correct height and dimension to allow easy access) and must be easy to clean.



Being able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns

- Farm animals must not be kept in barren environments that do not enable them to carry out natural behaviours, and that may result in boredom and frustration. For example, pigs have a strong instinct to root and carry out investigative behaviours, and require sufficient quantities of suitable material to do this.
- Most poultry will require suitable litter material (which must be kept in a dry, friable condition) in order that they can carry out scratching and dustbathing behaviours.
- Poultry also require suitable perches for roosting at night.

Companionship issues

- Farm animals should be given company of their own kind, and certainly should never be isolated from the sight, sound or smell of other farm animals.
- Unfamiliar adult animals, however, should be introduced to each other with great care as some species are aggressive towards unfamiliar individuals.
- Thought must be given to the possible consequences of removing the young from an adult animal, e.g. if all the young are removed, the animal will be left on its own.

Protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease

- A veterinary health plan must be developed for each species in conjunction with the attending vet.
- Regular vet checks are required, together with appropriate immunisation, treatment for and prevention of external and internal parasites, foot trimming (if necessary) of various species (to be done only by a trained and competent person using the correct equipment), shearing of sheep, llamas, etc. (by a trained competent person), and various other procedures necessary for maintenance of health
- Provision must be made for immediate humane destruction of 'casualty' (sick/injured) animals on-farm when necessary. This must be carried out by trained, competent individuals using the correct, well-maintained equipment or, ideally, by a vet.

Stock-keepers and general management

- It is vital that there is an experienced, dedicated stockperson to look after the animals every day.
- Care must not be left only to young people or inexperienced staff who may forget to feed and check the animals and may not recognise signs of health and welfare problems.
- All stock-keepers taking care of animals should be properly trained (ideally, the training should be validated, e.g. NVQs) and competent in the aspects of husbandry they will be called upon to undertake for each species.
- A stockperson or other competent person should be present on the site at all times (i.e. 24-hour cover) if the welfare of the animals is to be properly safeguarded. For example, in the event of a fire, animals are more likely to be successfully evacuated if someone is on site to raise the alarm, and to act appropriately.
- Plans must be developed and implemented, and precautions taken, to prevent/cope with emergencies such as fires and breakdown of supplies, e.g. food, water, electricity. All staff should be aware of, and familiar with, these procedures.

Access

- The educational establishment should ensure that children/young people are always closely supervised around farm animals and are taught to treat them with respect.
- Large numbers of people milling around may scare the animals, so only small supervised groups should be allowed around them at any one time, following strict conduct guidelines.
- Direct physical access should be strictly limited or preferably avoided, for the following reasons:
 - ✓ Physical contact may pass on disease or infection to animals and may cause them injury particularly in the case of young animals), fear and distress (especially with nervous species such as deer).
 - ✓ Handling or other close contact with newborn animals may cause mis-mothering (rejection of offspring by the mother).
 - ✓ Farm animals can carry a number of diseases that may be passed onto humans ('zoonosis' diseases).
 - ✓ People can be injured if animals become restless, frightened or protective of their young.

Transportation and slaughter

- If farm animals need to be transported, provisions must be made for this under proper conditions by trained, competent personnel, and journey times should be minimised.
- If animals are slaughtered at an abattoir, the abattoir should have a specially trained animal welfare officer to oversee the slaughter (the RSPCA advocates that every slaughterhouse should appoint such an officer), and all staff must be fully trained and competent.

Farm animal legislation

- Educational establishments should be aware of and keep up-to-date with all legislation relating to the ownership and movement of farm animals.
- The scope of the establishment's responsibility will vary according to the circumstances of the individual animal.

For more information, see:

Defra – on-farm animal welfare

www.defra.gov.uk/food-farm/animals/

RSPCA – farm animals

www.rspca.org.uk/farmanimals

RSPCA – pet care – farmyard animals

www.rspca.org.uk/servlet/Satellite?pagename=RSPCA/Page/RSPCAContentTemplate&cid=1152286830520&articleId=1154077752404

Breeding animals

The RSPCA opposes breeding programmes in schools. This concern includes the use of incubators and artificial environments for animals.*

Where animals are kept in schools proper provision should be made for their physical and mental wellbeing.*

This also includes the use of butterfly and snail-breeding kits, worms, ants and frogspawn.

It is difficult to guarantee the welfare of breeding animals under school conditions and the RSPCA believes that such programmes of study do not promote responsible attitudes to animal care and husbandry.

Visitors with animals and animal events

The RSPCA is opposed to all schemes that introduce animals into educational establishments, which are detrimental to the welfare of animals.*

The RSPCA is opposed to visitors taking animals into educational establishments where they are used largely for entertainment and are not part of a clearly defined programme of study.*

Many visiting speaker schemes and other animal-related events do not put the animals' needs first. Animals are often transported in unsuitable conditions, and the noise and unfamiliarity of an educational establishment can cause them distress. It should be remembered that animals are not just another educational resource; they are living creatures and their welfare needs must not be disregarded for short-term educational purposes.

The RSPCA is opposed to events and fundraisers at schools involving animals as their welfare cannot be guaranteed at all times. These include donkey derbies, pig, sheep and snail racing, birds of prey displays, pet shows and events where animals are used as prizes.

2. Alternatives to educational establishments keeping animals

In view of the challenges raised by the legal ‘duty of care’, the RSPCA recommends that rather than attempting to keep and look after their own animals, educational establishments should seek suitable alternatives.

Classroom pets

Some alternatives to using real animals include:

- soft toys and props
- role play and drama activities
- books, videos, DVDs and CD-ROMS
- observing animals’ behaviour in their natural habitat
- developing a wildlife area in the school grounds (see below).



Pet shows

Some alternatives to animal-related events include:

- sponsored litter clearances
- sponsored dog walks
- a photographic pet show where children/young people can bring in photos of their pets or favourite animals.

Farm animals

The RSPCA does not support visits to animal-related venues, which increase stress levels or cause unnecessary disturbance to animals. The animals’ welfare must remain paramount.*

The RSPCA believes that all educational visits should be part of a structured animal welfare curriculum.*

The RSPCA recommends that rather than attempting to set up and run their own farms, educational establishments should instead undertake visits to local working farms. This approach will also give the children a more realistic picture of modern commercial livestock farming.

Access To Farms (ATF) is a partnership of national organisations aiming to improve the opportunities and quality of educational access to farms by schools. ATF has developed the country's most comprehensive database of farms providing educational access. The partnership shares information and good practice, arranges joint educational projects, accredits farms that work with school groups, provides training, and manages an online database allowing teachers to identify the nearest or most suitable farm to visit (www.growingschools.org.uk/).

Wildlife areas

The RSPCA believes that small invertebrates (minibeasts) should be studied in their natural habitats in preference to the classroom.*

The RSPCA encourages the setting-up of wildlife areas within secure school grounds for the benefit of animals and to enhance and encourage educational study.

At all times, due regard must be paid to legislation relating to British wildlife.

Creating a wildlife area can:

- raise awareness about the wild animals that live in the local area
- encourage respect for wild animals and their habitats
- highlight how attractive the grounds of the educational establishment are to animals
- lead to an understanding of how people can harm or help wildlife.

It is advisable, however, to develop an appropriate code of conduct for using the wildlife areas and studying animals in their natural environment. For example:

- never handle animals – draw pictures or take photos instead
- move quietly and slowly so you do not disturb animals – and take care not to step on any animals that crawl/fly away
- leave animals' homes exactly as you found them. If you turn over rocks and logs put them back the way you found them
- do not drop litter.

Such a code would need to be communicated to the children/young people, and can even be written with their assistance. For lesson ideas on observing animals in the school grounds, visit www.rspca.org.uk/education

3. Protocols and care plans

If animals are kept in or brought into an educational establishment, it is advisable to develop, with the assistance of veterinary and/or expert advice, appropriate protocols and care plans for each of the different kinds of animals cared for by the establishment.

The protocols and care plans should be specific for the different types of animals kept by the educational establishment and deal with issues such as:

- the conditions and facilities in which the animal is kept (temporarily or permanently)
- the provision of food and water
- who is responsible for the day-to-day care of the animal during different times of the academic year including weekends and holidays
- what records should be kept and by whom
- what to do and who to contact if the animal becomes sick or dies
- safety procedures during an emergency, resulting in the establishment being closed temporarily or permanently (e.g. flooding, fire, breakdown of supplies such as food and electricity).

Appropriate protocols, care plans and record keeping are good ways to ensure and demonstrate that the management and staff at educational establishments are taking their legal responsibilities in relation to animals seriously.

Good practice

Educational establishments are required to follow the standard of 'good practice' when caring for animals. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 does not define what represents 'good practice', which may be subjective. Therefore, until court cases shed light on its meaning, it is advisable for educational establishments to follow:

- good practice guidelines issued by reputable organisations with expert knowledge in caring for animals

Education and animals Guidance for educational establishments in England and Wales

- advice given by a vet
- any relevant codes of practice issued under the Animal Welfare Act, which may offer practical guidance for the care of particular kinds of animals.

4. Buying pets and pets as prizes

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, it is illegal to sell an animal to a child/young person under 16 years old. The minimum age at which a child/young person may buy a pet has been raised to 16.

A child/young person is still able to 'own' a pet and a parent or responsible adult can buy a pet for a child under 16. However, the responsible adult is legally responsible for the new pet and will need to ensure that it is cared for properly.

It is also illegal to offer a pet as a prize to a child/young person under 16 who is not accompanied by an adult.

5. Dog shows and tail docking

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, the docking of dogs' tails is now illegal, unless it is necessary for medical reasons or in relation to certain working dogs.

There is also a ban on the showing of all dogs docked after 6 April 2007 in England and 28 March 2007 in Wales, at events to which fee-paying public are admitted.

The only dogs with docked tails that can be shown at events to which a fee-paying public is admitted are:

- certain working dogs shown for the purpose of demonstrating their working ability and
- dogs that have had their tails docked before 6 April 2007 (England) and 28 March 2007 (Wales).

Dogs with docked tails may still be shown at events to which the public is admitted free-of-charge.

6. Dissection of dead animals

The RSPCA is opposed to the dissection of vertebrate and invertebrate animals in educational establishments, except for veterinary degree courses where no alternatives are yet available.*

The RSPCA is opposed to any pupil being compelled either to perform or watch animal dissection.*

- The RSPCA believes that either taking part in or observing dissection can lead to desensitisation and a lessening of respect for life and that the methods involved in the rearing and killing of animals used for dissection may cause suffering. The views of students who wish to withdraw from dissection should be respected without penalty.

The RSPCA advocates the creation and use of educational resources that provide alternatives to dissection.*

The dissection of dead animals is not covered by the Animal Welfare Act 2006. However, an offence may be committed under the Act if an animal is destroyed in an inappropriate and inhumane manner. This applies equally to animals used for dissection.

The RSPCA believes that either taking part in or observing dissection can lead to the desensitisation and a lessening of respect for life and that the methods involved in the rearing and killing of animals used for dissection may cause suffering. The views of young people who wish to withdraw from dissection should be respected without penalty.

The RSPCA supports InterNICHE (www.interniche.org) for its work on identifying and promoting the use of alternatives to animals in education.

7. Behavioural experiments

The RSPCA is opposed to behavioural experiments that are detrimental to the welfare of animals, including invertebrates.*

- Behavioural experiments that deliberately expose animals to less than ideal conditions can lead to a desensitisation and lessening of respect for life. The RSPCA believes that it is more educationally beneficial to observe animals in their natural environment, performing normal behaviour.

For more information about the RSPCA's policies on research animals, visit www.rspca.org.uk/researchanimals

8. Technology

The RSPCA is opposed to the use of animals in technology projects that cause suffering to animals. Projects that involve the enhancement of animals' lives and the improvement of the environment are to be encouraged.*

The latter could include researching and building nest boxes and bird tables. For more information see the School grounds resources at www.rspca.org.uk/education.

9. 'Animal-friendly' educational establishments

Animal-friendly educational establishments do more than just teach about animals. They encourage both teachers and children/young people to think about animals' needs and to develop a sense of care and responsibility for them.

Benefits

An animal-friendly educational establishment:

- promotes a sense of responsibility and respect towards all living things
- teaches children/young people about animals and their needs
- is aware of and abides by animal welfare legislation
- looks at important contemporary moral and ethical issues like animal experimentation and the effect of humans on the environment
- encourages empathy and understanding of animals
- is relevant to everyday life.

Areas to think about

Curriculum opportunities

- Animal welfare can be a cross-curricular topic or integrated into a specific subject such as science, citizenship or PSHE and English.

- The current citizenship curriculum offers specific opportunities for teaching animal welfare topics at primary and secondary level.
- Visit www.rspca.org.uk/education for more information.

‘After-school’ clubs

- Animal welfare could be a priority for after-school clubs – children and young people with a special interest in animals will be eager to learn how to look after them properly.
- Visit www.rspca.org.uk and look at the UNDER 8TEENZ site.

Grounds

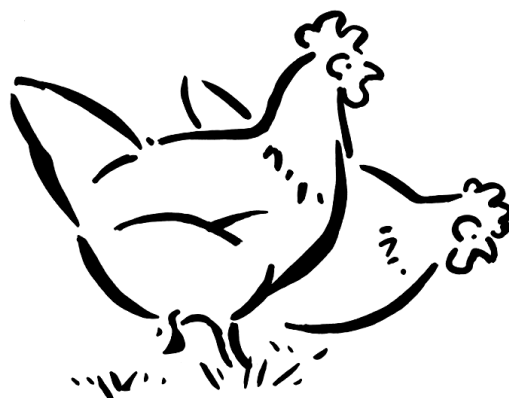
- The RSPCA recommends that educational establishments develop their grounds to make them more animal-friendly. This includes removing litter and other hazards and managing areas to encourage and protect wildlife. For more information see the ‘School grounds’ lesson resources at www.rspca.org.uk/education
- Wildlife and conservation areas in the grounds will attract a wide range of wildlife. Children and young people can learn about the animals and their habitats and explore environmental issues such as biodiversity and interdependence.

Litter

- Every day, RSPCA inspectors rescue pets and wild animals trapped or hurt by litter. Even rubbish that has been put in a rubbish bin may end up on an open landfill site and could be a danger to animals.
- Encourage recycling and make sure the waste is safe for animals:
 - ✓ Plastic can holders can choke – cut them up.
 - ✓ Plastic bags can suffocate – tie a knot in them and dispose of them properly.
 - ✓ Broken bottles can cut – recycle safely.
 - ✓ Tin cans can trap – take the lids off, put them inside and pinch the opening shut.
 - ✓ Balloons can kill if eaten – avoid balloon releases and cut up used balloons.

Food

- The RSPCA is opposed to all forms of farming that cause distress or suffering, or deprive an animal of the opportunity to express natural behaviour.
- The RSPCA works to encourage changes in attitudes to farm animals and the development and implementation of systems that satisfy the specific physical and behavioural needs of individual species.
- Freedom Food, set up by the RSPCA, is a farm assurance scheme that concentrates primarily on animal welfare. The RSPCA sets the standards for each of the species covered and these are based on scientific research, veterinary advice and practical farming experience. Freedom Food-labelled products are produced on farms inspected to RSPCA welfare standards. For more information see www.freedomfood.co.uk
- Encourage catering providers to introduce an animal-friendly school dinner menu using produce from farms with a higher standard of animal welfare, e.g. Freedom Food.
- Encourage school catering providers to introduce menus that are more animal-friendly (e.g. using Freedom Food-labelled farm products).



Cleaning products

- The RSPCA's ultimate aim is the replacement of animal experiments with humane alternatives. Until this can be achieved, animals used in research should receive humane and compassionate treatment at all times. The RSPCA therefore campaigns for 'the Three Rs':
 - ✓ Replacement of living animals in experiments with humane alternatives.
 - ✓ Reduction in the number of animals used.
 - ✓ Refinement of experiments and all aspects of housing, husbandry and care to reduce animal suffering and improve animal welfare.
- Encourage cleaning and catering staff to use cleaning products that have not been tested on animals.

School trips

- Observing animals in captivity, including zoos, farm and safari parks, rescue centres and sanctuaries, raises a number of animal welfare questions:
 - ✓ Are the animals behaving naturally?
 - ✓ Are their needs being met?
 - ✓ What are pupils learning about the animals and their needs from seeing them in captivity?
- The RSPCA recommends using the following checklist before taking children/young people to an animal venue:
 - ✓ Visit the venue before the trip to assess animal welfare issues that might be raised and identify any health and safety considerations.
 - ✓ Ask pupils to think about the animals, their needs and their natural lifestyle before the visit. Identify what they will be looking for and why.
 - ✓ Draw up a code of conduct for the visit with pupils to ensure that disturbance to animals and their homes is kept to a minimum.
 - ✓ Highlight the animals' needs and question whether they are being met throughout the visit – encourage students to focus on the quality of the animals' environments.
 - ✓ Follow up any animal welfare issues raised after the visit.

How the RSPCA can help

- The RSPCA's free education service supports teachers to develop informed, responsible and active citizens, and helps schools to become more animal-friendly.
- The RSPCA's education website – www.rspca.org.uk/education – has a variety of resources, linked to the English and Welsh curricula, which are free to download and include factsheets, activity sheets and photos.
- The RSPCA has a team of education training and development advisers who can arrange ITT and INSET sessions to demonstrate how animal welfare can be used as a focus or context for the delivery of the National Curriculum. For contact details, visit www.rspca.org.uk/education.

Useful websites

* *RSPCA policies on animal welfare* (booklet available to order from www.rspca.org.uk/publications)

RSPCA Education

www.rspca.org.uk/education

RSPCA – pet care

www.rspca.org.uk/petcare

RSPCA – science group (farm animals, research animals, wildlife and companion animals)

www.rspca.org.uk/sciencegroup

RSPCA Freedom Food

www.freedomfood.co.uk

Defra – animal welfare

www.defra.gov.uk/food-farm/animals/

Animal Welfare Act (England)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/contents>

Animal Welfare Act (Wales)

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/animalwelfare/animalwelfareact2006/?lang=en>

InterNICHE

www.interniche.org

Growing Schools

www.growingschools.org.uk/

RSPCA

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West Sussex

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