



Lealands
High School

2025

Lealands High School
School Rabbits
Policy & Risk Assessment

Includes:

Purpose and introduction

Interaction with pupils and staff

Hygiene / Health

Activities involving the rabbits

Lealands High School
Rabbits Policy & Risk
Assessment

Completed: May 2025

To be reviewed: May 2026

School Rabbits Policy & Risk Assessment

Purpose

- Rabbits teach responsibility. Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a rabbit can give students a sense of importance and satisfaction. The relationship that develops can be life-changing for a student and a great support system.
- Rabbits teach patience. Rabbits do not always do as they are told first time!
- Rabbits teach compassion. Rabbits feel emotion and pain and can also get injuries.
- Rabbits teach about socialisation. Rabbits are social animals. By learning how to interact with a rabbit, students can learn how to better socialise with each other. If they can learn the social cues of a rabbit, then interacting with humans who can talk will become easier.

Many people have studied rabbits in attempts to decipher their behaviour. You just have to witness the interactions between rabbits and students to realise the potential calmness. Rabbits can sense stress and anxiety and help to alleviate these negative feelings. They can help students with physical and mental disabilities. They can bring a sense of calm and comfort to the lives of many.

Introduction

The Lealands High School rabbits 'Sonny and Storm' live with our KS3 Team leader Mrs Strachan. Sonny and Storm are very caring and well behaved rabbits who have the right temperament to become a real asset to Lealands High School.

Sonny and Storm are Flemish rabbits. They were born in January 2024.

Sonny and Storm have liability insurance, this means they can come into school. Sonny and Storm regularly visit the vet for check-ups to ensure they remain happy and healthy. The rabbits' health care plan at the vet covers immunisations and treatment against fleas, worms and ticks.

In addition to the 4 key reasons for Sonny and Storm joining us outlined in the purpose, we also believe they will improve the students' abilities within the school and help to improve attendance levels.

Assessment carried out by: Emma Strachan

Assessment Date: 17/04/2024

Event: School Pets – Rabbits in Student Support

Hazards	Who might be harmed?	What are we doing to manage the risk?	Tick if in place	Outcome H/M/L risk
Scratches, bites, nips etc	Rabbits : being dropped by students & adults: being bitten, skin broken, bleeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students taught how to safely hold and look after rabbits to limit animals becoming stressed. ● Adults will ensure that the rabbits are calm before being picked up. ● If a rabbit is being carried from one location to another over a distance, they should be transferred into a small box to ensure their safety. ● Scratches, nips and biting cannot be avoided altogether. Appropriate first aid precautions and training are in place. ● Students are only allowed to handle any animal under staff supervision. ● Students warned not to put fingers through bars. Rabbits were selected for their calm temperament. 	Yes	L
Safety and care of animals	Rabbits: being harmed, unclean environment, not enough access to food and water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students understand high expectations regarding their behaviour around the rabbits. ● The Student Support Team will check the rabbit daily for signs of stress or illness: weight loss (from weekly weigh in), hiding- isolating itself from the children, seems overly nervous, sleeping more than normal, hair loss, poor appetite. ● The Student Support Team will lead the cleaning and care (food, water, grooming) of the rabbits. Signs of good health: agile, clear and bright eyes, clean nose, clean ears, fur is clean and matt free, nails are a good length, feet should not be sore, teeth should be a good length, good appetite, interacting with children. If any of the following are noticed a vet will be consulted: ● Any sudden change in behaviour or habits (vocalising more or less, scratching, licking, etc.) ● Any change in eating or drinking (ingesting either more or less, refusing favourite foods, etc.) 	Yes	L

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any change in appearance (loss of fur, swollen areas, squinty eyes, flaky skin, etc.) • Any unusual discharge from the body (runny nose or eyes, odd urine, bleeding, etc.) • Any change in movement (limping, unwillingness to move, etc.) • Any change in urination or faeces. • The rabbits will stay in school overnight but go home with a staff member over the weekend. During school holidays, a member of staff will take them home. • A secure and clean cage will ensure that they cannot escape, are not harmed and are healthy. The rabbits will be kept indoors in a quiet and calm environment but not isolated from daily life in school. • Their cage will include enrichments such as places to hide, climb over and places to gnaw to keep teeth from over growing. • Students will be on a rota with staff to clean and feed the rabbits. These students will volunteer. 		
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Handling including allergies	Students' parents or carers sign a consent form for the school pets during induction. This will allow parents to indicate whether they give consent for the student to be in contact with the rabbits. Risk that a student/adult with an allergy may come into contact with the rabbits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allergies are also highlighted during children's induction, which should alert us to allergies to pets. • Students known to have allergic reactions to specific animals will have restricted access to those that may trigger a response. • When handling pets students will be under direct supervision. • Students will not consume food or drink. Students will wash their hands with soap and water before and directly after handling the rabbits. • Letter sent to all parents with form requesting that they inform school of relevant allergies (to be added to the school medical list managed by Matron). Medical list reviewed by student support staff and a list of known allergy sufferers kept visible in the Student Support Area for student support staff to check prior to allowing student contact with the rabbits. • Students wash hands with soap and water thoroughly for 20 seconds prior to and immediately after handling/touching rabbits in school; supervised by school staff. 	Yes	L
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Fear	Rabbits: stressed, being dropped Students and adults: stressed, scared.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will be given a choice in whether they want to hold the rabbits. The rabbits will be introduced slowly to the students. 	Yes	L
Escape	If a rabbit were to escape from their hutch/pen they might come into contact with an allergic or fearful person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adults only to remove rabbits from their hutch/pen and secure hutches and pens and check these are secured regularly throughout the day. ● Pupils in areas where the rabbits are kept to be informed not to touch pen/hutch and supervised. 	Yes	L