Introduction

At Compass School we aim to provide a nurturing and supportive environment in order for children to thrive. One way of supporting them in this is to have a variety of pets in school to make this a welcoming and calm environment.

1. Rationale for having Pets in School

Research has shown that pets can:
- Increase empathy and responsibility in children
- Teach children how to nurture, care and have respect for all life
- Improve academic achievement by helping children to concentrate and feel calm at school.

2. Aims

- To provide a safe and secure environment where pupils can develop their Communication, Social and Emotional Literacy Skills.
- Strengthen pupil’s emotional well-being enabling them to access learning more readily.
- Help pupils re-establish good relationships with their peers and adults and see school as a place to feel included.
- Develop the pupil’s sense of self, belonging and trust.
- To see an improvement in behaviour, attainment and attendance of pupils.
- To support children in their reading if needed.

3. Impact on the pupils

- Decrease isolation and depression.
- Help to feel calm.
- Development and improvement of social skills.
- Lower anxiety and decrease agitation.
- Reduce loneliness.
- Help pupils access and leave the school calmly.
4. Guidance and Responsibilities

- The Lead Pets in School person will oversee relevant guidance relating to each animal and amend practice in response to changing guidance.
- Risk assessments and care sheets will be provided for each different animals by The Lead Pets in School person.
- The Lead Pets in School person will oversee all animal care and safety throughout the school, but day to day maintenance and feeding will be overseen by the designated class teacher or LSA.
- Animals remain the responsibility of their owner (usually the class teacher) and they will be responsible for buying food and any vets bills incurred.
- Support is always available from the Lead Pets in School person and her number is given to people with day to day care responsibilities.
- The named person for each animal will monitor its health and happiness and remove the animal from the school to an identified quiet area if it's needed.
- The health and wellbeing of the animal is our primary concern.

5. Health and Safety

- Pupil’s parents or carers sign a consent form for the school dog during induction.
- Any allergies are also highlighted during induction, which should alert us to allergies to other pets.
- Staff have also completed a permission form indicated their wishes for interacting with school animals.
- Pupils and Staff who do not wish to be near the dog are highlighted to his handler.
- There is a picture of the school dog in reception so visitors have a sign and can tell office staff if they are not comfortable around the school dog.
- All other animals pictures are displayed on room doors, so visitors do not need to enter if they don't like that pet.
- If a pupil or staff are allergic to a class pet, the pet will be moved to another area of the school.

6. Evaluation

- Formal and informal feedback from staff and pupils is regularly requested, collected and acted upon.