



# Whittlesford Out of School Club

## Guinea Pig Policy

Whittlesford out of school club recognises that the presence of animals in our setting can provide a valuable learning experience. The wellbeing and care of the animal should also be in line to ensure the best possible conditions for the animals.

### HANDLING ANIMALS

If animals are to be handled, the most important issue is the maintenance of good hygiene. When handling animals we will ensure the children/adults:

- Have written consent from the parents for their child to do so,
- do not consume food or drink
- cover any open cuts or abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms with waterproof adhesive dressings
- wash hands with soap and water before and directly after handling animals.
- keep the animals away from the face.

Careful handling of the Guinea Pigs is most important; The children will be shown by a member of staff how the animals should be held. They should be restrained sufficiently so that, they cannot damage themselves or the handler.

Wosc will aim to get the Guinea Pigs out daily. In this way they will hopefully become quite tame and accustomed to being handled by the adults and children alike.

### Physical injuries

Parents will be asked to sign a permission form so their children can handle the animals as there is always the danger of bites and scratches. Signs are displayed on the cage to advise the children not to poke their fingers in the cage, but Small fingers poked in may be interpreted as an offering of food and obligingly bitten. The children will be shown the dos and don'ts before they approach the cage.

### Diseases, parasites and allergies.

The likelihood of diseases being passed on from pet animals is low. However allergic reactions to Guinea Pigs cannot be discounted. These might result from handling the animals or just from being near them and be detected by the development of skin rashes, irritation to the eyes and nose or breathing difficulties.

Children known to have allergic reactions to specific animals must, of course, have restricted access to those that may trigger a response. In most cases, an allergic reaction will subside once the animal and the affected person are kept apart

Good general hygiene and hand washing are essential for risk reduction.

### CLEANING AND HYGIENE

This is clearly important, both for the health of the animals and for those people looking after them. The Guinea Pigs will be cleaned out daily with the help of the children, if they wish to do so. None of the children will be made to help if they do not wish to. Hands will be washed before and after cleaning out cages and runs. Rubber gloves, aprons etc will be worn when carrying out any cleaning of the animals.