

## Risk Assessment: Keeping Chickens in School

|                                     |             |       |                             |                    |            |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Risk assessment (2) carried out by: | Headteacher | Date: | 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2026 | Due for review on: | April 2027 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------|

### **Please state the benefits to the children of offering this experience?**

#### **Active Learning**

Studies show that children who participate in learning activities where they're able to get hands-on with animals are more confident learners, develop stronger literacy and numeracy skills, and are generally more creative than children who don't. For example, when a child is actively caring for an animal (like a chicken), he or she is practicing problem solving skills by figuring out how to feed it properly, interact with it appropriately, and keep it healthy.

#### **Responsibility and Empathy**

Caring for chickens shows them how important it is to take care of all living things – including chickens! By caring for a pet chicken at Sir James Knott Nursery School, we can teach children about responsibility while having fun together. For example, learning how to feed them, how to clean their coop, and how to ensure they stay healthy foster children's sense of responsibility for something outside of themselves. Chickens can be an excellent addition to any classroom because they help foster empathy and compassion in young children. In addition, these tasks being completed on a regular basis will develop pride in their accomplishments.

#### **Connection with their World**

Research has shown that it's beneficial for children to engage with nature from an early age. Animal-based learning is a powerful way of exposing young minds to STEM, literacy, problem solving, and motor skills. By bringing chickens into your school you can create some memorable experiences that are great fun for both your children and their families.

## Healthy Eating

Chickens are a great way to get families involved in the schools opportunities and experiences. These low-maintenance animals are a great way for children of all ages (and adults!) to learn nutrition and healthy eating together. Make children responsible for collecting the eggs and encourage families to take them home for breakfast. Together families are learning about where their food comes from and about eating healthy options.

## And of Course, The Lifecycle

Children can observe eggs being hatched by baby chicks and play a vital role in caring for them into adulthood for the cycle to start again

| Hazards  | Who is at risk?                                  | Existing Control Measures  | Further action required, if any                             | Action by whom? | Action by when? | Completed |
|--|--|--|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| <b>Zoonotic disease</b><br><br>Contact with chicken faeces via shoes, housing, equipment and handling the birds. | Pupils<br><br>Staff/ Supervisors<br><br>Visitors | Pupils are given hygiene and safety briefings before touching the birds. They are reminded not to touch their faces or put anything in their mouths while working with the chickens and they are required to wash their hands immediately afterwards. They are reminded not to kiss the chickens.<br><br>Pupils are not permitted to eat and drink in the chicken area.<br><br>Hand-washing signage is in place to remind anyone who has touched the chickens or their housing/ equipment to | Hand gel is available immediately outside the chicken area. | All staff       | Current         | Yes       |

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|  |   | <p>wash their hands. All children and staff wash hands after every outdoor session.</p> <p>Fresh cuts and grazes are covered before working with the birds.</p> <p>Pupils are required to wear outdoor shoes, use a disinfectant mat when entering the chicken run or areas where the chickens' free range to ensure that chicken droppings are not brought into the building.</p> <p>Pupils with compromised immune systems are not permitted to work with chickens.</p> <p>The hen house and run/ free ranging area is kept suitably clean with the chicken house, perches and equipment disinfected on a regular schedule.</p> <p>Pupils are not permitted to play in areas where chicken waste is disposed of, for example around compost heaps.</p> |  |           |         |     |
| <p><b>Allergic reactions and respiratory problems</b></p> <p>Contact with feathers, straw or bedding materials such as</p> | <p>Pupils</p> <p>Staff/ Supervisors</p> <p>Visitors</p> | <p>Pupils with known allergies are not permitted to carry out potentially risks tasks such as adding bedding to the hen house.</p> <p>Pupils are reminded in their hygiene and safety briefing to let a member of staff</p>  |  | All staff | Current | Yes |

|  |   |   |  |           |         |     |
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| <p>diatomaceous earth</p> <p>Allergic reaction-rashes, swelling, anaphylaxis</p>                     |   | <p>know if they feel unwell at any point during or after working with the chickens.</p> <p>Pupils will NOT carry out ANY cleaning tasks.</p> <p>A low dust bedding will be used for the chicken house.</p>  |  |           |         |     |
| <p><b>Injuries from the chickens</b></p> <p>Scratches and pecks</p>                                  | <p>Pupils</p> <p>Staff/ Supervisors</p> <p>Visitors</p> | <p>Pupils are briefed on working safely with the chickens, including proper animal handling procedure.</p> <p>Handling posters will be placed in the chicken outdoor area.</p> <p>Pupils are reminded not to hold the chickens in front of their faces or to push their fingers through the bars of the house.</p> <p>Husbandry tasks such as claw, and wing clipping are carried out by staff if necessary.</p> <p>Any chickens that are consistently aggressive towards the children will be rehomed.</p> |  | All staff | Current | Yes |
| <p><b>Injuries from chicken housing and equipment</b></p> <p>Scratches, cuts, splinters, bruises</p> | <p>Pupils</p> <p>Staff/ Supervisors</p>                 | <p>The chicken house and run are checked on a regular schedule for maintenance issues.</p> <p>Lightweight feeders, drinkers and appropriately sized tools are used.</p>   |  | All staff | Current | Yes |

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|   |   | <p>Pupils are briefed on safe tool use.</p> <p>Pupils are not permitted to ride in wheelbarrows.</p> <p>Pupils are not permitted to carry heavy items such as bedding bales.</p>  |  |           |         |     |
| <b>Illness or injury from contact with chicken health care products</b> | <p>Pupils</p> <p>Staff/ Supervisors</p>                 | <p>All chicken cleaning and health care products are stored safely in accordance with COSHH regulations.</p> <p>Pupils will NOT use ANY cleaning products.</p>  |  | All staff | Current | Yes |
| <b>Allergies</b><br><br>Reactions, skin irritation, poisoning           | <p>Pupils</p> <p>Staff/ Supervisors</p> <p>Visitors</p> | <p>Fresh cuts and grazes are covered before working with health care products.</p> <p>Any chicken medications must be mixed and administered and stored with strict supervision by staff.</p>   |  | All staff | Current | Yes |
| <b>Accidents</b><br><br>Slips and trips                                 | <p>Pupils</p> <p>Staff/ Supervisors</p> <p>Visitors</p> | <p>Appropriate first aid arrangements in place always. First aid box located in the outdoor area. Emergency procedure in place.</p> <p>Suitable footwear to be worn at all times.</p> <p>Pupils entering the chicken area to be limited to a safe number. No pupils are to enter the chicken run area.</p> <p>Staff are requested to consider the adult to child ratios in relation to the number and cohort of pupils visiting the chickens.</p> |  | All staff | Current | Yes |

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|  |                              | The working areas to be kept as clear as trip hazards as possible, for example brooms, hose pipe and shovels will be cleared away immediately after use.  |  |           |         |     |
| <b>Chickens suffer poor welfare standards</b>  | Pupils<br>Staff/ Supervisors | <p>Rota of cover to ensure that the birds have access to food, water and suitable space.</p> <p>There will be plans in place during the school holidays and weekends as and when required.</p> <p>Rota to ensure regular cleaning of coop and disinfection at least once a month, more if required.</p> <p>If restocking flock, ensure that the requirements e.g. access to feeder and water, perching space, nest box room are still complied with.</p> <p>When introducing other chickens, to ensure that this is as stress free a process as possible.</p> |  | All staff | Current | Yes |
| <b>Out of date eggs being distributed which could cause potential harm if ingested</b> | Pupils<br>Staff/ Supervisors | <p>Egg collecting procedure strictly adhered to by all participants.</p> <p>All eggs to be collected and processed on the same day.</p> <p>Any damaged eggs destroyed.</p> <p>Any eggs found on site in an unusual place to be destroyed as age unknown.</p>  |  | All staff | Current | Yes |

Sir James Knott Nursery School operates under a dynamic risk assessing process which is the continuous process of identifying hazards, assessing risk, acting to eliminate or reduce risk, monitoring and reviewing, in the rapidly changing environment of working with children.

Staff are requested to clearly brief their group/ class before or upon arrival and to set appropriate standards of behaviour in relation to the Health and Safety of the children, adults and chickens.

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| <b>Signed:</b> J. Croft | <b>Position:</b> Headteacher | <b>Date:</b> 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2026 |
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