



Our Guinea Pig – Cookie

Having a Guinea pig will encourage the children's nurturing and caring nature to help them develop responsibility as they learn to care for her. We are aware that some children may suffer allergies and so require you to give permission for your child to stroke, hold, handle or be involved with any of the animals.

There are many benefits to having Cookie the Guinea Pig at pre-school, including:

- the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower anxiety levels, simply by making the environment happier and more enjoyable.
- guinea Pigs can be used to calm fears, relieve anxieties and teach skills.
- improved behaviour and concentration, reduced stress and improvement in pupils' self-esteem;
- encouraging expression, participation and confidence for all children;
- fostering a sense of responsibility;
- motivating pupils to think and to learn, as most children have a high level of natural interest in, enthusiasm for and enjoyment of animals;
- encouraging respect and thereby improving pupils' relationships with each other, parents and teachers;
- teaching children to nurture and respect life;
- helping children build confidence in reading;
- improving overall attendance;
- further promoting our well-being agenda for pupils and staff.

The Guinea pigs will be treated in accordance to their needs.

We will need to be aware of any children with allergies and a full risk assessment is completed. If you want to see this risk assessment please ask a member of the pre-school team.

For any new pupils arriving at the pre-school we will discuss with the children the rules and expectations about having a Guinea Pig in the pre-school, the 'Do's and Don'ts' and we will again highlight the many benefits and rewards, too. However, should you have any queries or questions on the matter then please do not hesitate to contact the pre-school staff. Equally should you wish your child NOT to meet with or spend anytime with Cookie the Guinea Pig please register your concerns to withdraw your child from contact.