



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Occupational Health & Safety - GREEN ALERT School fined over risks of zoonotic diseases!

Issue reference: OHS0136

Date of issue: 13/10/2021



Applicable to all Headteachers

An Academy Trust has been fined after failing to control the risk to humans from infectious diseases carried by animals.

The Trust, which operates 12 schools, failed to properly control the risk from zoonotic diseases to employees, pupils and visitors at one of its schools. The school was home to several animals including goats, pigs and rabbits.

Investigating, the HSE found that the Trust had failed to provide adequate washing facilities to control the risks of disease to employees, pupils and visitors to the school. The Trust had also failed to provide suitable housing for the animals to minimise the risk to children as well as adequate training for staff.

The Trust pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. They were fined £20,000, ordered to pay costs of £7,304.10 and a victim surcharge of £170.

Speaking after the hearing, the HSE inspector said: "HSE recognise the wider learning benefits from keeping animals in the school environment, however, schools must ensure that the risks of zoonotic diseases are adequately assessed and effectively controlled. This includes adequate supervision and washing facilities. In this case, the Trust failed to implement suitable arrangements which meant that there was a significant risk to the health of people including the children."

**Health & Safety Services,
Residents Services
London Borough of Hillingdon,
2E 01, Civic Centre, High Street,
Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 1UW**

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Key actions required for Headteachers:

1. Ensure you are familiar with the [Animal Welfare Act 2006](#) if keeping school pets and [government advice](#)
2. Ensure the welfare of the animal(s) is the priority
3. Create an appropriate animal welfare environment, consider weather, vandalism, security, foxes etc
4. Consider who is responsible for looking after the animals, including evenings, weekends and school holidays
5. Consider if there are there adequate financial resources to care for the animal(s), including
 - o routine visits to vets for immunisation etc
 - o food, bedding, enclosure repairs etc
 - o grooming
 - o unexpected ill health
6. Consider how the school will deal with any animal deaths; dealing with the animal and pupils/staff who may be upset
7. Consider how pupils will interact with the animal(s) to ensure the safety and welfare of both, ensure interactions are always supervised. Some staff maybe more susceptible to infections from interactions such as those with weakened immune systems
8. Ensure there are adequate hand washing facilities following any interactions

Should you require any further information or support in implementing the requirements of this alert please contact your [Health & Safety Team](#)

Traffic light key	
Red alerts	Mandatory - where immediate action may be required
Amber alerts	Mandatory - with a timescale for action that may be required.
Green alerts	Information only