

Great Oak Farm – Animal Welfare & Biosecurity Policy

1. Policy Statement

Our farm is committed to the highest standards of animal welfare and strict biosecurity. Bringing children into contact with farm livestock provides invaluable educational benefits. However, it requires rigorous management to prevent the spread of diseases passed from animals to humans, and to protect the well-being of our animals.

2. Regulatory Compliance

This policy follows the UK Animal Welfare Act 2006, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Agriculture Information Sheet No. 23, and the Access to Farms Code of Practice.

3. Animal Welfare Standards (The Five Freedoms)

All animals on our site will be managed to ensure they experience:

- Freedom from hunger and thirst: Constant access to fresh water and the correct diet.
- Freedom from discomfort: Clean bedding, shelter, and protection from extreme weather.
- Freedom from pain, injury, or disease: Regular vet checks and immediate treatment.
- Freedom to express normal behaviour: Adequate space and the company of their own kind.
- Freedom from fear and distress: Animals will have private "rest zones" where children are completely barred from entering, allowing animals to escape interaction.

4. Biosecurity and Infection Control

To prevent the introduction or spread of disease across the site, the school enforces the following rules:

- Visitor Hygiene Boundaries: The site is divided into "Clean Zones" (Forest school and The acorn cabin) and "Livestock Zones" (barns, paddocks).
- Transition Controls: No one may move from a Livestock Zone to a Clean Zone without cleaning their hands thoroughly.
- Handwashing Mandate: Anyone who touches an animal or a farm fence must wash their hands with liquid soap and running water immediately. Alcohol hand gels are not permitted as a substitute.
- No Food Zones: No human food or drink may be carried into or consumed within any livestock area.

5. Staff Training and Responsibilities

- The Lead Practitioner will check animal health daily before children arrive on site.
- Any animal showing signs of illness or stress will be isolated immediately, and children will be barred from that area.
- All staff must be trained to recognize signs of animal distress and halt child interactions instantly if they appear.