

Working With Animals Policy

The Green Room Foundation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Owner: BT/KRD

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Introduction

This document is designed to ensure and encourage a consistently high standard of work amongst all staff and students at GRK and GRPK when working with the animals. This information is intended to allow continuity of care in the animal department at GRK and GRPK.

Please report to the Animals Tutor (Rebecca Donovan) with any issues when working in the Animal department. In their absence, please report to the Head of GRK or the GRPK Leader. .

Staff & Student Safety

Staff must read all risk assessments, as well as this document before starting to work with the animals.

Students must be made aware of the areas of policy that affect them.

Some jobs and tasks at GRK and GRPK require specialist PPE; these are detailed in the risk assessments and it is each member of staff's responsibility to ensure these are adhered to. Information read, where relevant, should be passed onto students/volunteers/work experience staff/visitors.

First Aid

All first aid incidents, as a result of animal contact, should be recorded using an Accident Report Form. This can be filled in by any member of staff. First aid treatment should only be provided by trained first aid staff. Using any item from a first aid box requires an accident report form to be filled out. First aid boxes should be checked monthly by first aid trained and refilled when necessary. (See First Aid Policy)

Lone Working

If any staff are working alone for a period of time, then they should 'check in' with other members of staff using GRK google chat group the following:

- When you arrive: send a message: In
- After each hour: send a thumbs up emoji to show everything is ok
- When you leave: send a message: Out

If contact hasn't been reached with a lone worker then staff should endeavour to contact them to confirm their safety.

PPE

PPE is provided by GRK and GRPK to all staff members and students which must be worn when working with animals. This can include;

- Gloves
- Steel toe-capped boots
- Goggles
- Overalls
- Helmets

In quarantine areas staff are encouraged to observe quarantine procedures and be aware of site cross contamination that can occur from one enclosure to another or from an animal area to a classroom area.

The only jewellery allowed when working with animals is:

Wedding bands / engagement rings.

Medical alert bracelet / necklace

Small ear studs.

A watch

Staff Radios

All permanent staff will be allocated a numbered radio which will be theirs to use on a daily basis. All radios should be picked up on arrival by staff and put back in the office on charge overnight. All staff are to ensure their radio is working, checked and switched on at the beginning of every working day.

Daily Duties and Expectations

All staff and students have the responsibility of ensuring that all the animals under their care receive the highest standards of husbandry possible. Management will clarify specific expectations, but general tasks include (but not limited to) a morning and shut down head check, feeding, cleaning, providing medication, keeping accurate records, enclosure checks and maintaining equipment.

Once duties are complete all PPE is taken off before returning to indoor lessons. Staff and students wash hands following any animal or enclosure contact and any PPE that needs to be washed is placed in the utility room.

It is expected that the animal manager will keep animals up to date with their required vaccinations and ensure any regular medication needed is bought in correct quantities at the correct time for the animals. The animal manager will ensure electronic record keeping systems are up to date

A daily briefing must be attended by all staff (unless unable to attend for a suitable reason) every weekday at 9am so all staff can be made aware of any animal issues.

Animal Welfare at GRK

GRK and GRPK follow the five principles below, which are based on the "Five Freedoms drawn up for livestock by the Farm Animal Welfare Committee.

1. Provision of food and water

Both food and water are basic needs. The method of food presentation, the frequency of feeds and the nutritional balance must be taken into account. Food should be presented in a manner and frequency commensurate with the natural behaviour of the species, as well as its nutritional requirements, which may vary according to season.

2. Provision of a suitable environment

An environment consistent with species requirements must be provided. This should include shade and shelter from rain, heat and cold as appropriate.

3. Provision of animal healthcare

Injury: The provision of an enclosure designed to minimise the risk of injury is required. The design should allow animals to get away from each other. In mixed species exhibits, care should be taken that one species cannot injure another. Enclosures should be designed to minimise the risk of predators entering the exhibit.

Disease: curative and preventive veterinary medicine should be provided. Every effort must be made to provide a correct diet and suitably hygienic environment from which pathogens are excluded or controlled.

4. Provision of an opportunity to express most normal behaviour

Animals should be allowed the opportunity to express most normal behaviour, taking into account current enrichment and husbandry guidelines.

5. Provision of protection from fear and distress

Particular areas to look at are: group composition, sex ratios and numbers of animals in an enclosure and space and furniture in both indoor and outdoor areas.

Enclosure design should provide areas of escape from other animals and people. Animals often benefit from mixed species environments. However, interspecies conflict can cause stress and this needs to be monitored, recorded and reviewed, including safety from potential predators.

Specific husbandry guidelines on the current GRK and GRPK species are found in the animal bible which is found in the lab.

Signs

GRK and GRPK has suitable warning signs and information provided where animals and visitors may come into contact. Hand washing and sanitiser signs are evident around the sites.

An adequate number of safety signs (in accordance with British Standards BS 5378 (or any future amendments) and, where appropriate, the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 (or any future amendments)), giving warning of the hazard either by symbol or a combination of symbol and words, should be provided on any electrified fence.

Any buildings where a hazard exists are kept locked. Warning notices are displayed to indicate that access is either unsafe or not permitted.

Symbol-based signs used wherever practicable to assist. Safety signs on any electrified section of perimeter fence should face both outwards and inwards.

Euthanasia

Euthanasia is justifiable if, in the opinion of a vet, an animal is suffering from an incurable disease, or severe pain or suffering which cannot be alleviated. The animal manager will make the decision after taking the vets opinion and holding an ethics meeting with staff.

Working with Animals

There are a number of hazards associated with working with any animals, for example:

- Zoonoses (diseases transmitted from animals to humans)
- Cuts, Bites, Kicks, Being knocked over

It should also be noted that individuals and groups of animals may have peculiarities which, depending on their age and sexual maturity, will be relevant in determining the safety of close-contact working. The animal manager will make this decision and inform other staff and students appropriately.

Categorisation of animals according to ability to cause harm to people in proportion to risk levels are shown below:

- **Category 2 species:** Donkeys, Horses, Goats, Pigs, Ducks, Geese, Ferrets, Sheep, Ponies
- **Category 3 species:** Rabbits, Chickens, Crested geckos, Leopard geckos, Giant African Land Snails, Stick insects

Contact may be allowed between Category 2 and 3 animals and staff/students, so long as:

- There is adequate training and supervision;
- There is full awareness of zoonoses (implications and necessary controls);
- The peculiarities of individual animals are assessed.

At GRK and GRPK the decision to allow 'hands on' contact must not be left to individuals' own personal preferences, but is part of a very clear organisational policy, with absolute limitations and controls.

GRK and GRPK allows contact with its animals for students and staff from considering the following aspects:

- Awareness, training, and general suitability of the relevant employees;
- The age, size, demeanour and character of individual animals at the time any permitted contact commences;
- The potential for hierarchical challenges that could affect the safety of such contact;

- The need to establish and demonstrate an acceptable relationship between the animal and staff/student;
- Staff/animal ratios during contact;
- The provision of personal protective equipment;
- The need for supervision and control,

Zoonoses

Animals have the potential to transmit diseases to humans. These diseases are known as zoonoses. Even where the animals appear disease-free, their health status at GRK and GRPK is established by regular veterinary examination to identify latent infection or carriers, i.e. infected animals showing no symptoms. In the normal course of their work, staff and students are likely to be exposed to a variety of zoonotic infections.

Special precautions are taken to reduce the risk of staff, students and volunteers and visitors being infected. Such precautions include being able to isolate sick or suspect animals and the policy of wearing PPE during animal duties and hand washing once finishing work with animals.

Zoonoses are biological agents. This term is defined in the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) (as amended) as 'micro-organisms which may cause infection or otherwise create a hazard to human health'. These Regulations require GRK to carry out an assessment of the health risks from all hazardous substances, including biological agents, in order to protect staff, students and volunteers. The specific diseases, caused by biological agents, which must be reported (RIDDOR) include:

- Anthrax;
- Brucellosis;
- Avian and ovine chlamydiosis (psittacosis);
- Leptospirosis;
- Rabies;
- Tuberculosis;
- Any other infection reliably attributable to work with animals or any potentially infected animal material.

Risk of infection may come from animal tissue, faeces, body fluids, bedding etc, and each source must be covered in risk assessments. Risk assessments include:

- The biological agent that may be present;
- What form it takes;
- The diseases it may cause;
- How it is transmitted;
- The likelihood of exposure and consequent disease, including the identification of workers who may be particularly susceptible, eg pregnant women and individuals who are immunocompromised;
- The control measures to be applied;
- The provision of information to employees and the use of medical contact cards;
- The need for monitoring procedures including health surveillance.

To reduce the risk of zoonotic infections, GRK use good animal husbandry techniques which include:

- Maintaining good standards of hygiene in animal enclosures and exercising care in the use of water hoses during cleaning, so as to reduce aerosols;

- Avoiding contamination of animal drinking water with faeces; regular animal health checks by a veterinary surgeon including worming, skin treatment programmes and vaccination;
- Disposing of animal waste correctly;
- Providing and monitoring the use of appropriate personal protective equipment
- Encouraging and following the highest standards of personal hygiene.
- The provision of adequate washing facilities, including running hot and cold or warm water, soap and paper towels wherever employees work with animals;
- Ensuring that cuts and abrasions are washed immediately with soap and running hot water (antiseptics should only be used by a trained first-aider);
- Ensuring that any existing cuts, abrasions and open sores are covered with a waterproof dressing before starting work;
- Ensuring that staff and students wash their hands regularly and especially before and after they eat, drink or use the toilet;
- Ensuring employees eat only in designated clean areas;
- Keep hands away from the face, in particular the mouth, nose and eyes;
- Avoid tasting food intended for animals;
- Training staff and students to recognise zoonotic infection risks as well as the necessary control measures;
- Ensuring that employees clean or change footwear and overalls before leaving animal areas, disinfect footwear if necessary and wash their hands after handling contaminated clothing.
- When an animal has died at GRK, care should be taken in handling the body. Any post-mortem examination and disposal of remains must follow agreed safe procedures. The Animal Manager would take it to the vet for post mortem where they would dispose of it. If they couldn't they could recommend another vet who could. It would be a staff only job using correct PPE and no students would pick up the body or touch it.

PPE at GRK and GRPK must be suitable for the intended use and properly maintained. It must fit properly to be effective and to ensure that other risks are not introduced. All new PPE should be CE marked as this proves conformity with European directives.

The zoonotic risks associated with working in contact with animals should be included in the ongoing training of all employees. Sufficient information should be given to enable managers and their employees to effectively contribute to the assessment and control of the risks and thereby prevent infections. This should also cover the practical use of procedures, techniques and safety equipment required to control the risk of infection.

In addition, all employees should be encouraged to report any suspicious symptoms they may have to assist with early diagnosis and infection controls. Common zoonoses are listed at the end of this document. It gives brief notes on the likely source of infection, how it is passed to humans (eg directly or indirectly) and associated symptoms of the disease. Infection can be spread by various means, eg viral, bacterial, protozoal, fungal and parasitic.

If GRK or GRPK need further advice they will try one of the following:

- Contact the Employment Medical Advisory Service. They can be contacted through your local HSE office or your local authority;
- Employ an occupational health consultant;
- Obtain advice on infections and their control from your local consultant in communicable disease control (consultant in public health medicine in Scotland). You can contact them through your

local health protection unit of the Health Protection Agency, or your local authority environmental health department can advise you;

- Contact veterinary surgeons, who will also be able to provide guidance on zoonotic diseases. Contact the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons;
- See the DEFRA website for information on avian flu.

Common Zoonotic Diseases: [List of zoonotic diseases](#)

Animal Sickness Procedure

If an animal is found requiring medical attention the procedure below must be followed:

During normal office hours:

- Inform the Animals Tutor immediately. If the Animals Tutor is unavailable then contact the Head of Provision of GRPK Leader.
- The Animals Tutor or Head of Provision/GRPK Leader will then decide upon the route of action:
- Contact Vet
- Isolate animal if required
- Monitor and await instruction
- If an external veterinary practice suggests a treatment with a cost implication, then this must be estimated and further verbal approval is required from the Head of Provision
- Any euthanasia must be in accordance with euthanasia policy. The body must be disposed of following the correct disposal procedure.

Out-of-Hours 5pm-8am:

- Call the animal manager or Head of Provision/GRPK Leader
- Follow the procedure above from point 2

Waste Management

- Recycling: All recyclable material should be placed into the bins located at the GRK site.
- Compost: All safe non-toxic animal waste can be composted on the site compost heaps.
- Clinical Waste: All items from Veterinary related equipment should be put into clinical waste bags and securely fastened (i.e. with a cable tie) and be professionally collected by an external company for incineration.
- Hazardous Chemical waste: Any chemicals that require professional disposal (from COSHH or stated on packaging) should be stored in safe storage and await correct disposal.
- General Waste: All general waste must be placed in black bin bags and put into the bins opposite GRK.
- Industry standard husbandry techniques and general hygiene measures should be carried out.

Disinfection:

The company's chosen and preferred disinfectant is Virkon S.

Virkon S is a powerful broad spectrum virucidal disinfectant, it is UK DEFRA approved.

It should be used, following the strict dilution instructions for all cleaning and disinfection purposes for day to day use and as well quarantine use.

Control of Infection

The Green Room undertakes precautions and procedures to minimise any cross contamination and to control the risk of infection.

The Green Room follows a strict cleaning procedure. The areas to be cleaned will include all areas of The Green Room, including kitchens and toilets, that are accessible on the ground floor or by stairs. Cleaners are not required or allowed to access walls or roofs. No step ladders or ladders are provided.

Please see the table below for the cleaning schedule.

Health & Safety

Staff must adhere to the following cleaning health & safety guidelines:

- Appropriate personal protective equipment - gloves, apron, brush etc must be used. These are found in the cleaning cupboard. The office must be informed if any new equipment is needed.
- Safety instructions on the cleaning products must be followed All cleaning products will be provided by The Green Room and adhere to COSHH regulations. The office must be informed when it is time to replenish products.
- Legionella checks are carried out monthly. The temperature for hot and cold taps are tested and must comply with regulation - under 20 degrees C for cold water and over 50 degrees C for hot.
- If a student has been ill they must stay away from the provision for 48 hours to prevent the spread of infection.

Containment of animals and escape prevention

Animals at GRK and GRPK are effectively contained in order to protect staff, students and any visitors to the sites. Even 'least risk' animals can become a safety hazard should they escape. Containment takes the form of an outer perimeter boundary enclosing the entire provision, in addition to:

- Fenced enclosures
- Fenced, walled, moated or ditched paddocks
- Tanks
- Vivaria; (an enclosure, container, or structure adapted or prepared for keeping animals under semi-natural conditions for observation or study or as pets; an aquarium or terrarium)
- Stables
- Field Shelters

The perimeter boundary includes all entry and exit points, is appropriately designed, constructed and managed to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, both the escape of animals and the entry of unauthorised people and predators.

Animal Enclosures

The enclosures are designed, constructed and maintained so animals can be effectively contained to prevent their escape.

Where GRK and GRPK has free running animals, this may well be the perimeter fencing of the provision. At the same time, the enclosure should be constructed to minimise the chance of unauthorised people gaining entry.

Sections of electric fence may be used in certain circumstances where the risks associated with its use can be effectively controlled.

Staff and students enter animal enclosures for feeding, cleaning, alterations and maintenance.

Risk	Species	Capture Equipment	Catch up procedure
Medium	Mustelids(e.g. ferrets)	Container Nets Extra staff Ladders Gauntlets	A radio call to all staff can be made if their presence is required to assist Move all visitors & students away from the specific area Ensure all doors are closed and are manned to ensure they are not opened Staff to use equipment to usher animal(s) into a suitably sized container and then return to enclosure Assess enclosure to determine how animal(s) escaped
Low	All birds Donkeys Horses Sheep Goats Pigs	Nets Safety gloves Transport tub/carry box Ladder	A radio call to all staff can be made if their presence is required to assist Ensure all doors are closed and are manned to ensure they are not opened Pick up the animal, usher it into a box or back to its enclosure, or if necessary use a net to recapture. Once captured place back in its enclosure Assess enclosure to determine how it escaped
Low	All other invertebrates reptiles and rodents	Safety gloves Container	A radio call to all staff can be made if their presence is required to assist Ensure all doors are closed and are manned to ensure they are not opened Pick up the animal (use safety gloves if unsure) or usher it into a container. Once captured place back in its enclosure Assess enclosure to determine how it escaped

Staff and Training

GRK and GRPK will make every effort to ensure that their staff do not have any convictions or a background of the ill-treatment of animals under any animal welfare or conservation legislation including: Animal Welfare Act 2006; Pet Animals Act 1951; Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963; Riding Establishments Act 1964; Riding Establishments Act 1970; Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999; Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997; Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Also, continuous in-house staff training and development will occur, topics include: animal husbandry; animal welfare; health and safety and first aid; action in emergencies, escape, illness; safety procedures; food hygiene; diseases; in-situ and ex-situ conservation and educational techniques.

This policy is approved by the CEO of The Green Room Foundation

Date: _____

CEO: _____