

KEEPING OF CHICKENS



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact
briar.hill.ps@education.vic.gov.au

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the processes and procedures Briar Hill Primary School has regarding the keeping and caring for chickens as component of the School's Year 3 Farming curriculum.

SCOPE

To ensure that the school complies with legislation, and codes for the responsible care of chickens at school. The policy outlines best practice for:

- Daily, weekly, weekend and holiday care of chickens.
- Guidelines for safe and respectful handling of chickens.
- Guidelines for the safe and hygienic collection, storage and distribution of eggs.
- Regular maintenance and site inspection of the chicken coop and yard.

POLICY

Schools that would like to use chickens as part of a teaching activity must apply and receive approval from the Victorian School Animal Ethics Committee (VSAEC).

Schools who keep animals as pets do not require approval from VSAEC.

In accordance with the Education Department's 'Keeping Chickens in Victorian Schools' policy, our school falls into the category of 'keeping chickens as pets', as we are not engaged in any of the following activities:

- Raising healthy chickens programs (full life cycle): The school starts with baby chicks/eggs and rears them to adulthood and beyond.
- Hatching programs (partial life cycle): The school incubates eggs and hatches the baby chicks, and then returns them to the provider and/or finds homes for them.
- Agricultural breeding program: The school is participating in an agricultural program where they breed chickens.

<https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/Resource/LandingPage?ObjectId=bd21d0fa-202a-4e04-8866-0636f48e91cf&SearchScope=All>

Responsibility for the care of chickens

At Briar Hill Primary School, Year 3 students are the caretakers of the chickens. This relates to the study of Farming as part of the Steiner Curriculum. During a year in which there are combined 3/4 classrooms, this responsibility can be shared between the 3/4 students.

The chicken coop has been refurbished to allow chickens to roam safely between the small coop and an enclosed, outdoor area.

Daily Tasks:

Once per day

- check and refill food and water
- collect eggs and label with date before storing in labeled carton in staffroom fridge

Weekly - Each Friday, with adult supervision

- refill food container with 3 days worth of food
- wash and refill water tub
- sweep out and replace straw/hay
- As part of the Gardening Program, Rin brings the chickens, via a small side door, into the small, open but fenced orchard area, adjacent to coop. She is solely responsible for putting them back into the main coop at the end of the day.

Weekends

- Chickens are safe all weekend with sufficient food and water until Monday morning

School Holidays

- School families volunteer and have a roster outlining care of chickens over the holidays

Safe and Hygienic Egg Handling

- Students collect eggs daily. They need to wash their hands before and after handling the eggs. Lightly soiled eggs can be cleaned with a clean, dry, abrasive cloth. Student write the date on eggs and place them in staff room fridge in allocated carton.

Use of Eggs

- Eggs are used in the Kitchen Program.
- Kitchen Program staff implement the practice of not using eggs if they are 35 days past their collection date.

Student Chicken Monitors

- To support the optimal chicken health and wellbeing, teams of 2-4 students are nominated weekly from Year 3 as chicken monitors. The new monitors are inducted by the previous week's monitors each Friday.
- These monitors have access to a key for the padlocked gate of the coop.

Handling Practices

- It is agreed and discussed with the students that only the Chicken Monitors are allowed to handle the chickens during outdoor break times.
- Students are informed that chickens should only be picked up and held once per day as excessive handling can impact on their egg laying.

Purchasing Equipment – Food and Straw

- The school has an account at 'My Pet Place' at 32 Sherbourne Rd Briar Hill and large bags of food and bags of straw/hay can be purchased on the account.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following way:

- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

All Victorian government, Catholic and Independent schools using animals in teaching must comply with:

[Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act \(1986\)](#) - known as POCTA, applies to all individuals and organisations in Victoria, including schools, at all times.

[Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition \(2013\)](#) - ensures that whenever animals are used for teaching or research, it is justified, humane and considerate of each animal's needs.

[Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations \(2008\)](#).

[Code of Practice for the Housing and Care of Laboratory Mice, Rats, Guinea Pigs and Rabbits \(2004\)](#).

Victorian Schools Animals Ethics Committee (VSAEC) approval is not required if normal husbandry practices are used for chicken care and the production of eggs for consumption. For further information refer to [Food safety for Egg Producers](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2023
Consultation	School Council - July2023
Approved by	Principal and School Council
Next scheduled review date	July 2025