

Keeping Chickens in School Risk Assessment

Overview

Keeping chickens in school can be a rewarding experience for children of all ages; caring for chickens can help children to make connections with the natural world and animals. The work involved with keeping them can also be linked in with a wide-range of curriculum units. Additionally, it reconnects pupils with where their food comes from and allows them to make informed food choices of their own.

Requirements

- Coop and run - the space where your girls will pass the time of day, shelter from the elements, roost at night, lay their eggs, as well as offering protection from vermin
- Bedding -This goes in the nest box and on the floor of the coop. It is good to put down a layer of newspaper first as this makes the task of 'poop scooping' easier when it comes to cleaning time. Recommended types of bedding include straw or dust-free sawdust – both of which can be bought from the local Pet Store
- Drinker- the average laying hen can drink up to 500ml per day therefore a constant supply of water is essential.
- Feeder - Consider hanging or raising your feeder on a couple of bricks so that the girls don't accidentally get their food messy!
- Feed - chicken feed is widely available from pet and country Stores. As chicks, they will eat chick crumb. As the birds get older, they will progress onto growers mash or pellets. From Point of Lay onwards (the chicken equivalent of adolescence at around 16 – 20 weeks), they will be eating layers mash or pellets which includes all of the essential nutrients.
- Grit - Grit is another key requirement in the feeding regime. These are small pieces of crushed flint (sometimes with crushed oyster shells added). Because hens don't have teeth, they are unable to chew their food. Instead, they will eat some grit as and when they need it and store it in their gizzards. This will then grind their food up, in much the same way that a millstone grinds grain. Oyster shell grit contains calcium that is great for bones and egg development. Try storing grit in an old flowerpot, secured to the floor of the run by a wire loop inserted through the drain holes and pushed into the ground. As with the feeds, bags of grit can be easily bought from all good suppliers.
- Greens are an important part of a chicken's diet and access to vegetation is important to keep them entertained and satisfy their natural foraging behaviour (but make sure you protect your garden plants or they'll eat them too). Suitable vegetable matter includes berries, cabbage, spinach, chickweed, dandelion, apples and pears etc.
- Cleaning materials - Always have a dustpan, brush and poultry friendly cleanser to hand for all those important cleansing duties

Risk assessment

HAZARDS	WHO IS AT RISK?	EXISTING CONTROL MEASURES	FURTHER ACTION, IF ANY, REQUIRED	ACTION BY WHOM?	ACTION BY WHEN?	COMPLETED
<p>Zoonotic disease</p> <p>Contact with chicken faeces via shoes, housing, equipment and handling the birds.</p>	<p>Pupils Staff/ Supervisors Visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are given hygiene and safety briefings before working with the birds. They are reminded not to touch their faces or put anything in their mouths while working with the chickens and they are required to wash their hands immediately afterwards. They are reminded not to kiss the chickens. • Pupils are not permitted to eat and drink in the chicken areas. • Hand-washing signage is in place to remind anyone who has touched the hens or their housing/ equipment to wash their hands. • Hand gel may be used for immediate visible contamination but additional hand-washing remains compulsory. • Fresh cuts and grazes are covered before working with the birds. • Pupils are required to wear outdoor shoes use a disinfectant mat when entering the chicken run or areas where the hens free range to ensure that chicken droppings are not brought into the building. • Pupils with compromised immune systems are not permitted to work with the chickens. • The chicken house and run/ free ranging area is kept suitably clean with the hen house, perches and equipment disinfected on a regular schedule. • Pupils are not permitted to play in areas where chicken waste is disposed of, for example around compost heaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitiser gel is available immediately outside the chicken area. • Year 6 monitors to ensure all pupils that touch chickens use the sanitiser. 	<p>All staff</p>	<p>Current</p>	<p>Yes</p>

<p>Allergic reactions and respiratory problems</p> <p>Contact with feathers, straw or bedding materials, inhalation of products such as diatomaceous earth</p>	<p>Pupils Staff/ Supervisors Visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pupils with known allergies are not permitted to carry out potentially risky tasks such as adding bedding to the hen house. ● Pupils are reminded in their hygiene and safety briefing to let a member of staff know if they feel unwell at any point during or after working with the birds. ● When mite dusting the house pupils are required to wear dust masks and pupils with known respiratory problems are not permitted to take part in this activity. ● A low dust bedding will be used for the hen house. 				
<p>Injuries from chicken housing and equipment</p> <p>Scratches, cuts, splinters, bruises.</p>	<p>Pupils Staff Supervisors Visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The chicken house and run are checked on a regular schedule for maintenance issues ● Lightweight feeders, drinkers and appropriately sized tools are used ● Pupils are briefed on safe tool use ● Pupils are not permitted to ride in wheelbarrows or to carry heavy items such as bedding bales 				
<p>Injuries from the chickens</p> <p>Scratches and peck</p>	<p>Pupils Staff Supervisor s Visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pupils are briefed on working safely with the hens, including proper animal handling procedure. They are reminded not to hold the chickens in front of their faces or to push their fingers through the bars of the run. ● Claws are trimmed if necessary ● Husbandry tasks such as claw and wing clipping are carried out by staff if necessary ● Any birds that are consistently aggressive with the children will be culled or rehomed 				

<p>Illness or injury from contact with chicken health care products</p>	<p>Pupils Staff Supervisors Visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All chicken cleaning and health products are stored safely in accordance with COSHH regulations. ● Pupils are only allowed to use low risk products such as hen house disinfectant or mite powder and wear gloves/masks as appropriate 				
<p>Allergies reaction, skin irritation, poisoning</p>	<p>Pupils Staff Supervisors Visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any chicken medications must be mixed and administered and stored with strict supervision by staff ● Pupils are required to wash their hands immediately upon completion of cleaning/health tasks 				
<p>Accidents Slips and trips</p>	<p>Pupils Staff Supervisors Visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appropriate first aid arrangements in place. First aid box located in staff room ● Emergency procedure in place ● Pupils entering the chicken area to be limited to a safe number. A maximum of 2 children in the pen. ● The working area to be kept clear of trip hazards, r.g.brooms, hoses and equipment, and cleared away after use. 				