

ANIMAL HANDLING POLICY

Company Operations

ADO Services C.I.C

Incorporating ADO River Valley

Version 3.4 ©2023

2023-2024

Last Ratification By Management Committee	March 2023
Next Review By Management Committee	March 2026
Latest Update	March 2023

1 Animal Handling Policy Overview

It is the policy of ADO River Valley to promote and ensure that we provide a safe environment, socialised animals and the correct advice and guidance to students and wider stakeholders when handling or touching our collection of invertebrates, reptiles, mammals, and equines.

All of the core staff team are required to attend our own in-house animal handling training within the first 3 months of them being in post with us. Further training on the larger mammals, and equines is also provided to those staff who will be involved in facilitating interactions with them. Many of the ADO team have obtained further animal qualifications including Diplomas in Animal Care and Management, Animal Behaviour, and Animal Assisted Therapy and Equine certifications.

This policy is important as ADO do provide unique educational and therapeutic holistic programmes and this is covered extensively in our main **General Terms and Conditions**.

2. Interaction

Students will have the opportunity to observe, care for and handle specific animals which belong to ADO during the many types of educational opportunities that we may provide. ADO has over twenty various species of animals, including reptiles, invertebrates, amphibians, small common mammals, exotic mammals, farm animals, and equines (horses and ponies).

Within each lesson where there is likely to be interaction with our animals, the staff member leading will ensure that the correct advice and guidance is given throughout, supporting and communicating with them constantly.

Only animals suitable will be worked for each age group accordingly. For example large animals would not be allowed to work with children under 10 years of age, without strict supervision and overseeing, sometimes involving more than one staff member. However, as our students are all 14 years and above they are all eligible to interact with our larger animals.

Animals utilised for handling are well socialised with groups of people to ensure that the animals are used to handling and are not under undue stress, as this may cause harm to themselves or the holder.

Some of our species are 'Look No Touch' animals, which means that stakeholders help to care for them with support, however they are not able to handle them. This is due to the vulnerability of certain species and in larger mammals, they are simply not suited to handling.

It is the responsibility of staff to always ensure the correct handling, as they have trained for, are provided to all students whilst being tailored to their abilities.

3. Incidents and Escalations

ADO are fully insured for animal handling with some restrictions in place for certain animals and certain age groups. Any incidents or accidents that are involving an animal would be recorded on our **Incident Form**. All incidents are accurately notified to the parent-carer as soon as possible and a call may be made to the parent-carer following any incident dependent on the level of seriousness of that incident. If the incident was minor and the student is well, the parent-carer will be advised later that day.

ADO is committed to ensuring the Health, Safety and Welfare of its employees, students, animals and wider stakeholders to their sites and will continually work to ensure public health regulations are met across the board including animal handling activities. By the nature of working with some animals incidents and accidents will happen from time to time, but if sound advice and guidance is followed the risk is minimal.

In the case of a student displaying a failure to consistently comply with handling instructions, inappropriate behaviour to the animal or general bad behaviour, after two verbal warnings with the choice to change their approach to the handling, the situation will be escalated to an incident. The incident will be fully recorded for the parent-carer. The animal will be removed for its own safety and that of the holder. The incident will be automatically escalated to the ADO Senior Leadership for them to decide whether handling can then continue or is suitable for future experiences.

In the event of the animal reacting or biting as a result of inappropriate handling, the animal will be immediately removed and the incident will be recorded and escalated. If the animal has been provoked, despite the standard warning sequence and the holder has an injury as a result, the incident will be fully recorded, with evidential images if necessary. In this case, ADO will not be liable for the injury and will consider the future of further interactions between the animal and individual student, based upon the recorded data. ADO reserve the right to not continue animal interactions if incidents are deemed a risk.

4. Public Health

All animals can carry zoonotic diseases.

In line with Public Health regulations, animal waste is treated by staff wearing disposable gloves. Most herbivore waste is put into a specific composting bin at Poets Corner. Carnivore or omnivore waste is immediately tied up and moved into the relevant waste bin. If an animal defecates whilst handling, students are advised to not approach or touch that specific area until that zone has been cleaned with an acceptable product.

Our anti-bacterial gel and wipes conform to EN1276, prEN120254 and EN1500 standards and reduce any risk of zoonotic diseases and infections. Our ADO Animals are up to date on all recommended treatments and immunisations; they are regularly groomed (including claws trimmed) and checked for signs of infection. Animal bedding is to be laundered or replaced regularly. Animals are not placed near food preparation, storage or eating areas.

Students are also taught not to share food with any animal, and are educated on interaction, how to feed an animal with that animal's specific food where relevant.

Students are advised by staff to wash their hands at pertinent points during their sessions and we offer both hand washing stations, EN1500 gels or wipes and hot and cold water facilities.

It is the duty of each staff team member to take reasonable care of their own and other people's health, safety and welfare and to report any situation to their Line Manager which may pose a serious or imminent threat to the well-being of themselves or of any other person or animal.

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to ensure that ADO Health and Safety Regulations are adhered to and that the health and safety of the students and other members of staff or animal are not compromised in any way.

5. Review

All ADO policies and procedures follow ITIL guidelines to ensure version control, change control and release management of any documents. As a matter of policy, documents can be updated at any time to reflect changes to ADO procedures, legal changes, OFSTED directives or any other reason to ensure the policies and procedures are accurate and correct. This involves consultation with stakeholders, the ADO Management Committee and approval from the directors. All policies and procedures are reviewed at the very least on an annual basis. Regular communication through newsletters, social media, text systems and through our website within the ADO Library is part of our Release Management.

6. Contact

This document was produced by the ADO Operations Consultancy Team. This version supersedes any previous versions and will be reviewed annually.

All correspondence with regard to this policy, or any other operational policy and procedure should be directed to the ADO Business Operations and Support Executive by e-mailing gmp@adoservices.co.uk or calling 0208 855 6778, requesting to speak to Gary McHolland-Pilcher or in writing, ADO Services CIC, Head Office, 126 Upper Wickham Lane, Welling, Kent, DA16 3DP.

7. Table of Changes (See Next Page)

Annex A: Table of changes from February 2023. This table explains where we made changes under version control.

Summary	About the Guidance
Page 1- Section 1- Animal Handling Overview	All of the core staff team are required to attend our own in-house animal handling training within the first 3 months of them being in post with us.
Page 1- Section 2- Interaction	As our students are all 14 years and above they are all eligible to interact with our larger animals. (changed as policy was talking about younger ages which is not relevant to River Valley) instead an update to animal handling risk assessment will be done.
Page 2- Section 2 - Interaction	It is the responsibility of staff to always ensure the correct handling, as they have trained for, are provided to all students whilst being tailored to their abilities.
Page 3 – Section 3- Accidents and Escalations	ADO will not be liable for injuries whereby a student has deliberately impacted an animal enough for it to react. ADO reserve the right to not continue animal interactions if incidents are deemed a risk.