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| **GENERAL SCHOOLS RISK ASSESSMENT** | | |  |
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| **PART A. ASSESSMENT DETAILS:** | | | |
| **Area/task/activity: Tortoises in School**  **Location of activity: Headteacher’s Office and school grounds School – St John’s C.E. (VA) Primary, Cliviger, Burnley. BB10 4SU** | | | |
| **School name:**  **Address & Contact details:** | **St John’s C.E. (VA) Primary, Cliviger, Burnley. BB10 4SU** | **Name of Person(s) undertaking Assessment:** | Rob Klee |
| **Signature(s):** | Na*omi Healey* |
| **Headteacher (Name):** | Naomi Healey | **Date of Assessment:** | September 2025 |
| **Signature:** | *Naomi Healey* | **Planned Review Date:** | September 2026 |
| **How communicated to staff:** | On the school website and at governors | **Date communicated to staff:** | 21st July 2025 |

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| **PART B. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROL MEASURES:** |

| **List of significant hazards**  (something with the potential to cause harm) | **Who might be harmed?** | **Type of harm** | **Existing controls**  (Actions already taken to control the risk) |
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| General information | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers | All below | * Staff always refer to the Risk Assessment and implement the advice when handling/working with the tortoises. |
| General information | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers | All below | * Follow guidance issued by the RSPCA.<https://education.rspca.org.uk/education/teachers/animalfriendlyschools> |
| Location of enclosure | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers | Physical injury | A glass tank is not the best option for indoor housing. For the majority of tortoises, even the largest glass tanks are just too small and have poor ventilation. Big tanks are also hard to manoeuvre and clean. Tortoises need lots of floor space for roaming around, but the sides just need to be tall enough that the tortoise can't climb over (whereas aquariums tend to have tall sides). Unless the tank is very large, providing a proper temperature gradient for a tortoise is too difficult in a glass tank. In addition, tortoises seem to prefer non- transparent enclosures—they probably feel very exposed and vulnerable with glass-sided tanks, and often spend a lot of time trying to push through the transparent glass as well. The tortoises will be housed in a wooden enclosure in the Headteacher’s office. This is in a secure location with appropriate temperature controls and is able to be locked to prevent unsupervised access.  Avoid gravel, rocks, bricks, porcelain water which Tortoises may fall on and damage their shells. Maintain temperature around 18-30oC. A heat lamp is to be provided to ensure temperature is maintained around 21oC (avoid placing under the tank to ensure tortoises are not ‘cooked’ as substrate retains the heat).  In order for the tortoises to receive sufficient exercise and nutrition a secure outside pen is situated on the Green. This is portable and when in use will be supervised by a responsible adult. |
| Taking them outside | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors  Tortoise | Physical injury, allergies, infection Including salmonella, rat lungworm and meningitis | The tortoises should only be outside when the temperature is above 4 degrees Celsius. They are not to be outside in heavy rain, snow or hailstones.  The tortoises should only be outside once a day for up to 30 minutes at a time.  An adult should oversee the handling, and they are to be placed inside the pen on The Green. The children stay outside the pen and do not handle the tortoises.  A timetable will be placed in the staffroom and one visit outside per day should be requested on the timetable.  Mrs Healey/Mr Klee should be informed about the whereabouts of the tortoises when they are taken out of the HT office.  The tortoises are **not** to be taken to class and placed on the carpet. |
| Manual handling | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors, tortoises | Physical injury | * Children aware of expected behaviour and how to touch the animal. * Staff all Paediatric FA. First aid boxes on site, audited monthly. * Accidents/incidents recorded in first aid book. Animal to be in good health. * Animal faeces cleaned immediately. Area disinfected using approved substance suitable to setting and animal. * Any person displaying fear to be removed from the area and comforted as necessary. * Allergy forms on site * When handling the tortoises all persons should:   Remain calm, avoid sudden movements, not make loud noises, have permission to handle the tortoises, not touch the tortoise near its head or tail, always was hands after handling the tortoise.  Tortoises have an instinct to thrash their claws when they are picked up. If you wish to pick up your tortoise, do so by picking it up by the shell and then supporting its limbs as much as possible |
| Cleaning | Pupils, teachers, Tortoises | Physical injury, allergies, infection Including salmonella, rat lungworm and meningitis | Daily remove surface debris and waste food (prolong the life of the substrate) and reduce likelihood of mites (white fast moving insects).  To rid mites dispose of soil, clean tank in hot water and detergent. Remove all traces of detergent. Tortoises can be bathed in room temperature water to rid them of mites but their shells are delicate. Olive oil can be rubbed over their clean shell with a cotton wool ball. Handle them with damp hands.  The tortoises will be bathed 3 times a week for 10minutes by the designated person. |
| Diseases, parasites and allergies | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers | Illness, allergic reaction | * A letter will be sent to parents and Carers to ask them to identify any pupils known to have allergic reactions to the tortoises and these pupils are instructed and supervised to ensure they avoid all further contact with the tortoise * Medical assistance will be sought where an allergic reaction does not subside after a reasonable timeframe, the tortoise and the affected person will be kept apart; * Food must be kept safe and secure to prevent unauthorised access and to keep away from pests. |
| Feeding | Tortoise | Non maintenance of health | Feed varied diet supermarket/home grown fruit and vegetables like kale, dandelions, and mustard and collard greens.  Fruit: Berries, melon, kiwi, oranges and other fruits should make up 5-10% of a tortoise's diet.  Avoid pasta and highly acidic food e.g. oranges and onions.  Ensure food is washed thoroughly as Tortoises are susceptible to pesticides.  Remove untouched food before it has a chance to decompose.  Avoid; Daffodils, Azaleas, Foxgloves, buttercups, avocado, hydrangeas, citrus fruit, bean sprouts, morning glory, any bulbs  A designated adult will be responsible for the feeding of the tortoises and for ensuring they receive a nutritious and appropriate diet. |
| Welfare during holiday periods | Tortoise | Health and welfare | The tortoises will be cared for by designated adults during the holiday periods who have knowledge of how to care for them and a suitable environment at home. |
| Fire/Emergency Situation | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors  Tortoise | Physical Injury/Fatality | * The Tortoises Are located in the Heads teacher’s office and will be taken to the Fire Assembly Point by Headteacher(nominated person) as they evacuate themselves; If the Headteacher is in a different location a nominated person will be responsible for the evacuation of the tortoises if safe to do so. |
| Security of Premises | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers  Tortoise | Physical Injury | * Controlled access, Safeguarding policy available; * Staff to supervise pupils outside the building; * Headteacher’s office to remained locked when not on site; * Pupils have been informed about only entering the HT office when an adult is in there; * Gates are kept locked, Visitors cars and delivery vans onto the car park e.g. permission to access school grounds is sought from the Headteacher |

Risk Benefit.

The five freedoms that apply to any living creature in our care.

1: Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition: give ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.

2: Freedom from discomfort: provide a suitable environment, including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

3: Freedom from pain, injury and disease: ensure prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.

4: Freedom to express normal behaviour: provide sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind.

5: Freedom from fear and distress: ensure conditions avoid mental suffering.

Having pets encourages children to have shared ownership over the care and attention given to another living creature, which teaches them how to respect and treat animals and in turn this passes over to interactions with humans. It engages them to respond to something other than their own their needs as the creature is dependent upon them for food, warmth, exercise, safety etc. This is often something the children may have not been exposed to thinking about before.

Children often talk, with pets, or about the pets promoting communication and language skills, children will also often draw pictures, paintings of the pets in the setting. Children sometime use pets as alter egos who they can play and talk with using their imaginative skills, which can solve problems or issues they may be experiencing.

The nursery will often take the children to the pet shop to purchase supplies for the animals further enhancing their children’s real life experiences and adding to the ownership and responsibility of looking after the animal. Stroking pets helps to release positive chemicals in the brain which in turn makes the child feel relaxed and happy. However some children are fearful of pets as they might be worried about them biting, scratching or other unpredictable behaviours, observing their peers interacting with pets can help children overcome their anxieties and find strategies to cope with situations they feel less confident about

This general risk assessment will apply to this area/task/activity in most schools providing the controlmeasures described are in operation and there are no further local significant hazards. If it does not fully apply and further control measures are required, please complete the Action Plan at Part C. if it fully applies please sign below.

I certify that the risk assessment above fully applies to the area/task/activity under assessment in St.John’s C.E. (VA) Primary, Cliviger.

Signed: Rob Klee/Naomi Healey Name: Rob Klee/Naomi Healey Risk Assessor.