



19th March 2021

Severndale Pets

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you may be aware from Sabrina's weekly update shared on the 5th March, we have begun to introduce pets into classes as part of the Covid-catch up strategy. We know that pets can help our students to build empathy, responsibility and life skills. In these ever-changing times, a consistent companion in class will support our children and young people to engage in an exciting daily routine and structure that offers new inclusive opportunities once covid restrictions are lifted.

Students from across the Formal department have been captivated by this project, working together to identify pets that would best suit Severndale and be loved and cared for by all of our pupils from Early Years to Sixth Form. We hope that the pets will provide alternative emotional, educational and personal learning opportunities that have been prevented elsewhere due to Covid restrictions.

Last week we welcomed fish into three of our classes and are now working with our local pet shop and experts - Abbie's Pet Shop, to prepare for the arrival of a patterned Hermann tortoise and two friendly rabbits in the coming weeks. Staff from Abbie's pet shop will be completing zoom sessions with pupils to teach them all about animal care and welfare. As soon as possible, we will welcome them into school to work with students in exciting hands-on sessions.

The two rabbits that will soon be joining the Severndale Academy belong to a member of staff who has young children themselves. The member of staff will bring the two Dwarf Lop rabbits to school each week so they can be cared for by pupils from Monday to Friday and return with the staff member home for weekends and holidays. We are also working with the RSPCA to ensure that all the animals at the Academy have the best care and resources needed to be safe and happy.

We have planned for the introduction of pets at school extensively and worked with our broad staff team who have past experience of owning and caring for a variety of animals at home. Information fact-files are attached to give you some information about the animals and our plans to care for them.

To support us in this endeavour, we are calling on the families of our students and staff, to offer their support for this project by volunteering to look after an academy pet for a weekend or a week in the holidays. Whatever you can offer will be incredibly supportive and contribute to this new exciting opportunity for our students. Pets and all equipment will be delivered by Severndale staff at a time to suit you. There will be no cost or transportation required by families. Information, advice and guides will be shared to ensure that you and the pet have everything they need for their short stay. We know that this will be a positive experience for those that are able to care for a pet for any period of time.

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Severndale Specialist Academy



Everyone valued. Everyone included. Everyone learning.

If you would like to offer your support in this way, please contact Laurence Riley by email at Laurence.Riley@severndaleacademy.co.uk. Alternatively, print and complete the form below and return with your young person in their home-school book. We will be collating a list of all those that are interested and will make contact on a termly basis to discuss a weekend or week which is appropriate for you.

We look forward to sharing lots of information and pictures as the pets arrive, make sure you check out our website and Facebook page for regular updates on our new additions.

Yours sincerely,

Laurence Riley

Laurence Riley
Formal Department Lead

If you are interested in supporting the Academy in this new adventure and would like to care for one of our pets for either a weekend or holiday please tick any of the boxes that apply.

1. I am interested in caring for a pet over a weekend in the future.
2. I am interested in caring for a pet over a holiday or part of a holiday. E.g. one week of the summer holidays, in the future.
3. I am interested in caring for a pet, but would like to learn more before making a decision.

Parent / Carer Name:

Student Name:

Class.....

Severndale Academy Pets

Cold Water Fish Factsheet

Our Fish Breeds:

Varitus Platys and Danios



Feeding:

Fish should be fed a small amount daily using cold water fish food. A fish's stomach is the same size as one of its eyes! Too much food can lead to an increase in ammonia in the water, which is bad for a fish's health.

General Care:

The fish tank should be placed in a flat location away from direct heat, light and noise sources, but close to a power outlet. The fish should never be directly touched and the fish tank should never be knocked or banged in case it upset the fish inside.



Hygiene and cleaning:

Every week, around 20% of the aquarium's water should be taken out and replaced with fresh tap water. A filter treatment should be added at the same time. The filter sponge (inside the filter) should be changed every 3 months. Gloves should be worn when changing water or adding water treatment.

A gravel cleaner can be used once a month to clear any dirt caught in the gravel.

Animal Behaviours:

Fish are calm and independent animals that like to live in groups. They don't like to be disturbed or touched.

Holiday and Weekend Care:

Fish will stay at school during the holidays and weekends. Water (25%) should be changed every two weeks. Feeding blocks can be used to feed fish for up to 10 days.

Resources Required:

- Fish tank – 30L
- Thermometer
- Fish food
- Filter
- Gravel cleaner
- Gravel
- Décor
- Water testing kit
- Filter treatment
- Aquarian Fish Food Feeding Blocks

Severndale Academy Pets

Tortoise Factsheet

Our Tortoise Breed:

Hermann Tortoise

Feeding:

A tortoise should be given an amount of food equivalent to the size of their shell everyday.

Tortoises love: water cress, rocket, grated carrot, chopped sweet pepper and weeds like dandelion, clover and plantain. Small quantities of fruit and vegetables can be given as treat.

Tortoise feed pellets can be used to supplement a tortoise's diet.

General Care:

Tortoises should be given a sprinkle of light calcium powder onto their food 2-3 times per week.

Holiday and Weekend Care:

Tortoises will need to be cared for at a home so they have enough food, water, vitamins and are bathed. Tortoise's home and resources can be taken with the tortoise to a local home by the academy's site service team.

Animal Behaviours:

Tortoises are solitary animals. They are docile and tend to be shy. Tortoises are not aggressive creatures. Like other animals, tortoises can be territorial and moody but with the right care they are a fantastic pet.

- Transportation box
- Calcium supplement
- Vitamin supplement
- Complete dry food
- Substrate (bedding)
- Reptile safe disinfectant



Hygiene:

Tortoises can carry the same strain of salmonella as cats and dogs. This strain is only present in the animal's poo. Those who practice good hygiene and wash their hands after handling the tortoise, bedding and cleaning up after their tortoise, will not catch salmonella. Gloves should be used when cleaning a tortoise's habitat.

Cleaning:

Every day: Refresh the tortoise's water bowl. Remove any leftover food and waste.

Every two or three weeks: Change out the bedding. Wipe down the habitat with cage cleaner or disinfectant.

Safety: Never use soap or detergent for tortoise. Always wash hands after handling or cleaning. Gloves should be used when cleaning a tortoise's habitat.

Resources Required:

- Tortoise Table
- Specialist reptile UV lights
- Heat lamp
- Reflector
- Heat mat
- Thermostat
- Thermometer
- Food and water dish.

Severndale Academy Pets

Rabbit Factsheet

Our Rabbit Breed:

Domesticated Dwarf Lops

Feeding:

Rabbits should have a daily diet of mostly hay, a smaller amount of fresh vegetables, and a limited number of pellets. Hay is the most important part of a rabbit's diet. Grass hay is high in fibre, which is important to maintaining a rabbit's healthy digestive tract.

General Care:

Rabbits should be given a large living area and a secure shelter where they can rest, feel safe and are protected from predators.

Rabbits need to chew to maintain the health of their continuously growing teeth. Chew toys should always be available; hard wooden chew toys (blocks and sticks) and cardboard are best.

Animal Behaviours:

Rabbits are sociable creatures, they are naturally social, intelligent and inquisitive animals. They should always be kept in pairs and can become friendly and confident around people if handled from a young age.

- Litter Tray
- Litter Tray Filling
- Rabbit Pellets (Feed)
- Toys



Hygiene and cleaning:

Any uneaten fresh foods should be removed from the cage daily. Food bowls should be cleaned and water bottles refilled everyday. The rabbit's hutch and run should be cleaned regularly.

Gloves should be used when cleaning a rabbit's hutch.

Holiday and Weekend Care:

Our two rabbits belong to a member of staff. The rabbits will be in school from Monday to Friday where they will be looked after and cared for by students. The rabbits will return home with the member of staff (who lives local to school) on weekends and holidays.

Resources Required:

- Hutch
- Run 3m x 3m x 2m
- Bedding Hay
- Feeding Hay / Grass
- Water bottle / water bowl.