

St Veronica's RC Primary School

Chicken Keeping Handbook



Context –

Why keep chicken in our primary school.

Legislation of keeping and selling eggs

Salmonella egg testing

Washing eggs information

Disposal of waste

Disposal of fallen stock

Product & Behaviour

Keeping chickens at School Policy

Why we keep chicken in our primary school.

1. Learning About Life Cycles and Nature

- Students can observe the life cycle of a chicken, from egg to chick to adult.
- This supports science topics like life processes, habitats, and animal care.

2. Responsibility and Care

- Feeding, cleaning, and collecting eggs teaches responsibility, teamwork, and empathy.
- Caring for animals fosters respect for living things.

3. Hands-On Learning

- Chickens provide a real-life context for lessons in biology, math (counting eggs), and even writing (diary entries or stories about the chickens).
- Outdoor learning becomes more engaging and meaningful.

4. Encouraging Healthy Eating

- Fresh eggs from school chickens can promote conversations about food origins and healthy eating.
- Children are often more willing to try foods they've helped produce.

5. Community and School Engagement

- Chickens can be a fun project that brings teachers, students, and parents together.
- They create a sense of pride and identity within the school community.

6. Low Maintenance and Cost-Effective

- Once set up, chickens are relatively easy to care for and low-cost compared to other animals.
- Schools can build coops and runs as DIY projects with student involvement.

Legislation

You do not need to register for a CPH number, this is only for cattle, sheep, goats and pigs. You can sell your eggs and use them in cooking lessons

Sell school eggs must follow these legislations-

1. Registration with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

- If a school keeps 50 or more hens, it must register as an egg production site with the APHA.

2. Labelling Requirements

All eggs sold must be labelled with:

- A best-before date (maximum 28 days from the date of lay)
- Storage instructions: "Keep refrigerated after purchase"

3. Food Safety and Hygiene

Schools must ensure that eggs are safe for human consumption. This includes:

- Not selling eggs from ill hens or those that have received medication until the end of the withdrawal period
- Not selling cracked or dirty eggs
- Not washing eggs, as this removes the protective outer layer
- Ensuring eggs are sold within 21 days of laying

4. Food Business Registration

- If the school intends to sell eggs to shops, restaurants, or at markets, it must register as a food business with the local council at least 28 days before starting operations – This is not applicable for St Veronicas RC Primary School

5. Food Hygiene Certification

- Staff involved in handling and selling eggs should have appropriate food hygiene training. While specific certifications may vary, having staff with a Level 2 Food Safety and Hygiene certificate is recommended

Relevant for St Veronicas RC Primary School

Egg Sales (fewer than 50 birds)

‘At the Gate’ Sales:

- you do not need to mark eggs with a producer code
- You do not need to label your boxes with anything (but it is best practice to do so).

Salmonella testing: Eggs

Requirements of the Salmonella National Control Program (NCP) for laying hens apply to all operators producing eggs on a commercial basis, except where:

- all production is for private domestic use
- the holding has fewer than 350 hens and supplies direct to the consumer or via local retailers

Why St Veronicas RC Primary School do not wash the eggs before 'At The Gate' sales:

"The priority in egg production is to produce clean eggs at the point of collection, rather than trying to clean them afterwards. The cleanliness of the egg should be assured by good management and hygiene of the poultry house, and by minimizing the delay between egg laying and egg collection." (www.fsai.ie)

Why not?

- "There is an increased risk of Salmonella transmission from the outside to the inside of eggs during washing.
- These risks can be multiplied several-fold by poor washing practice.

For example, if soiled eggs are left uncollected for a few hours after laying, and/or if they are left to soak in wash water, then there is more time for the Salmonella to pass through the shell into the egg. Additionally, if the washing water is not at least 11°C above the temperature of the egg, then Salmonella can be sucked into the egg through the pores in the shell. Even after washing, if eggs are not dried quickly and completely before storage then there is more chance of Salmonella penetrating the shell. The use of chemical detergents or sanitizers in the wash water may not help, because some chemicals may increase the porosity of the shell making it easier for Salmonella to cross the shell barrier. Getting egg washing right to avoid all these increased risks is not simple, and for that reason it is much safer not to wash them at all, but to concentrate on good husbandry, and the production of eggs that are clean in the first place.

Disposal of waste

Poultry litter, to be spread on land as fertilizer, is not classified as waste.

- Dirty bedding and litter can be composted beforehand, if any runoff is not allowed to contaminate waterways (the same as any high nitrate runoff).

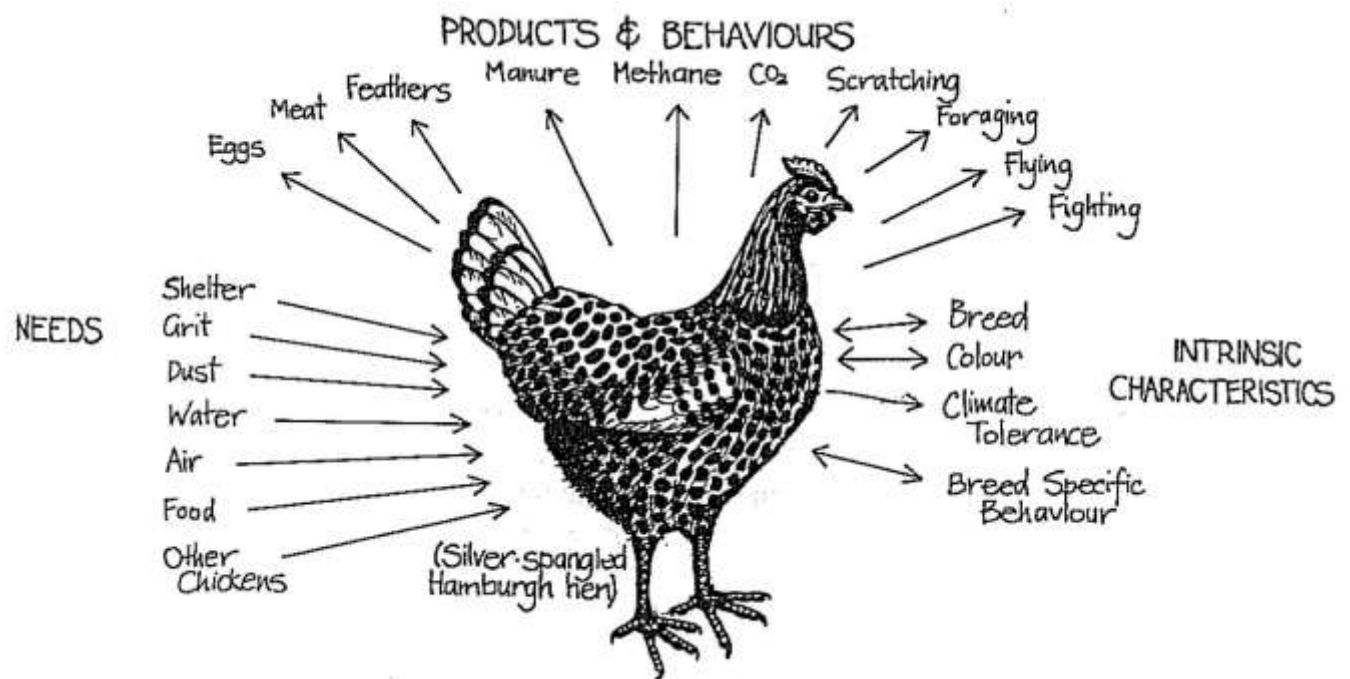
- Running poultry on land where fruit and veg are to be grown is fine, if managed wisely

Disposal of fallen stock

Chickens are not pets... “You are allowed to bury pet animals”. Chickens are poultry.

A pet animal is defined in the regulations as “any animal belonging to a species normally nourished and kept, but not consumed, by humans for purposes other than farming”. This does not apply to farm animals such as sheep, cows, pigs, goats and poultry. Farm animals must be disposed of using an approved disposal method for fallen stock. (www.gov.uk)

Product & Behaviours



Keeping Chickens at School Policy

Purpose:

To provide educational opportunities through the responsible care of chickens on school grounds while ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of students, staff, and animals.

1. Educational Rationale

Keeping chickens can:

- Support science, sustainability, and agricultural education.
- Teach responsibility, empathy, and care for living things.
- Contribute to school garden and food waste programs.
- Forest School holistic education

2. Approval & Oversight

- Mrs White, St Veronicas RC Primary Schools Head Teacher has approved the chickens being located in the forest school area.
- A designated **Chickens Care Coordinator** (Jessica Fraser-Kelly) will oversee daily care, maintenance, and emergency plans.

3. Animal Welfare

- Chickens must be kept in a secure, ventilated, and weather-proof coop with sufficient space per bird (generally 0.4 m² per bird inside, 1 m² outside).
- Chickens must have daily access to clean water, appropriate feed, and shade.
- Veterinary care must be accessible.
- Chickens showing signs of illness must be separated and treated immediately.

4. Health & Safety

- Strict handwashing procedures must be followed after contact with chickens or their environment.
- Hand sanitizer is kept on the forest school site to help limit risks
- Students must be supervised when interacting with chickens.
- Biosecurity measures must be in place to reduce disease transmission (e.g. salmonella)

5. Curriculum Integration

- Chickens should be incorporated into science, forest school, environmental studies, or other relevant areas.
- Teachers may use the chickens as a tool for practical learning (life cycles, food systems, biology, etc.).

6. Care Roster & Holidays

- A weekly care roster involving staff, students (with permission), and volunteers should be maintained.
 - Arrangements must be made for weekends and school holidays.
 - Clear emergency contact details and care instructions should be posted near the coop.
- Jessica Fraser-Kelly, Forest School Lead 07547507869

7. Waste Management

- Coop must be cleaned weekly or more often if necessary.
- Manure must be composted or disposed of in line with local regulations.
- Odour and pests must be controlled.

8. Community Involvement

- Chickens kept on site will come from a local farm, advice, guidance and support from local farmers has been provided ahead of caring for the chickens.
- During the holidays the holiday club will be assisting with the care of the chickens as well as staff members who have committed to supporting the correct care and upkeep of the chickens.
- Eggs may be used for educational purposes or distributed via 'At The Gate' Sale following all the correct guidelines.

9. Animal Ethics & End-of-Life Plan

- The school must commit to caring for chickens for their natural life span or rehoming them responsibly if needed.
- No chickens may be slaughtered on school grounds.

10. Review

- This policy should be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.
- Feedback from staff, parents, and students should inform revisions.

Policy written June 2025 by Jesscia Fraser-Kelly (Forest School Leader)