

# St Marks CofE Primary School Farm



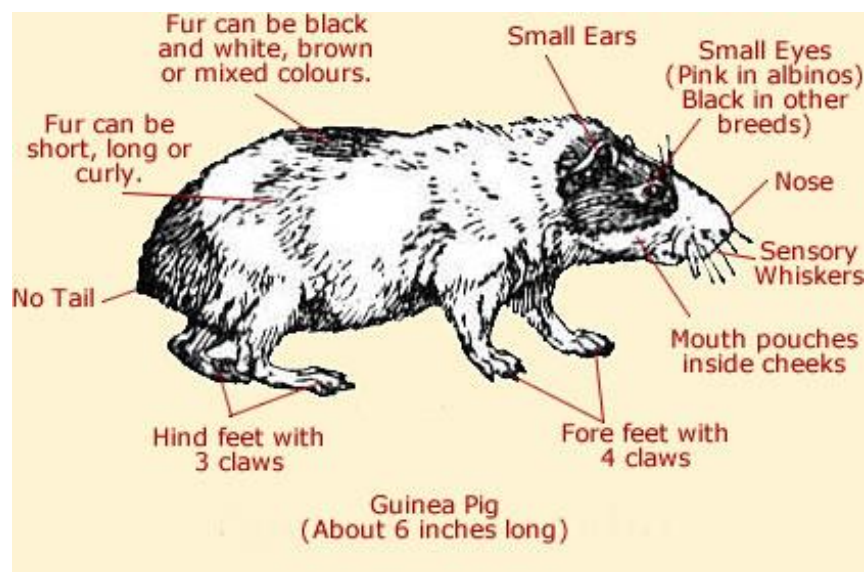
## A Guide to Caring for Guinea Pigs



## Introduction to Guinea Pigs

Guinea pigs, also known as 'cavies', are social animals with a compact, rounded body shape, short legs, and no tail. They originate from the grasslands and lower slopes of the Andes Mountains in South America. There are different breeds and varieties of guinea pig, with a wide range of colour and coat lengths. They usually live for 5 – 6 years, but some may live longer.

## Guinea Pig Anatomy



# Guinea Pig Husbandry Guidelines

## The Animal Welfare Act 2006

By law, anyone who keeps animals is placed under a duty of care by the Animal Welfare Act 2006. This is a piece of legislation that sets out the requirements you must meet in order to keep your animals healthy and safe. The act sets out 5 animal welfare needs that you must adhere to when keeping your guinea pigs. This booklet will help guide you to meeting these needs.

The 5 animal welfare needs:

- need for a suitable environment.
- need for a suitable diet.
- need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns.
- need to be housed with, or apart, from other animals.
- need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury, and disease.

Now, let's look through the 5 animal welfare needs individually.

## A Suitable environment

Guinea pigs are active animals, and need a large exercise area for running, exploring, playing and hiding and a secure shelter where they can rest, feel safe and are protected from predators and extremes of weather and temperature. A hutch should not be the guinea pigs' only permanent home as it will not meet their need for space and stimulation which could cause health and behaviour problems.

### **Inside environment – The hutch**

The hutch should be sheltered from direct sun and the prevailing wind direction and off the ground so that it doesn't get damp. Ideally, when temperatures drop to below 15°C, guinea pigs should be housed indoors. If not, they must be provided with sufficient bedding throughout the whole enclosure to enable them to keep warm and a cover for their accommodation is advised.

A hutch must be provided for shelter from poor weather as well as a safe place to rest. The floor of the hutch must be covered with a suitable dry substrate, such as wood shavings or megazorb. You should top this up or replace it when needed.

The hutch must be well ventilated, dry, and draught-free and they need to be protected from predators and extremes of weather and temperature. Living in draughty, damp, hot, poorly ventilated, or dirty environments can cause suffering and illness.

Finally, the hutch and everything inside must be regularly cleaned and disinfected to remove parasites and prevent disease. The guinea pig's toilet area(s) should be spot-cleaned every day. The whole home should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected regularly – once a week. Cleaning is potentially stressful for guinea pigs so after cleaning, a small amount of the used but unsoiled bedding should be placed back into the toilet area of the hutch as this will smell familiar to the guinea pigs and help to reduce the stress caused by cleaning. Only non-toxic cleaning products should be used (such as Safe4), and the housing should be dry before the guinea pigs are let back in it.

## **Outside environment – The run**

They need to be provided with enough space to be able to run, hide, play, and stand up on their back legs. The run should provide opportunities for exploration and enrichment, such as guinea pig safe toys.

Shade must be provided as protection from the sun or bad weather. The plastic tarp must be over a minimum of 1/2 of the run at all times. Any food or water in the run must also be placed under the sheltered area to avoid it getting wet in the rain or too hot in the sun.

You must ensure that any weeds growing in the grass of the run are guinea pig safe and non-toxic.

Guinea pigs must be able to avoid things that scare them. They are a prey species and must be able to hide in a secure place so make sure your guinea pigs have constant access to safe hiding places such as PVC pipes, cardboard boxes, and plastic shelters – where they can go to be alone if they want to or hide if they feel afraid. There must be enough places to allow all your guinea pigs to hide at the same time.

If nighttime temperatures are below 15°C the guinea pigs must be shut inside the hutch area with the sliding door closed behind them. This is due to the fact that guinea pigs are very susceptible to cold weather which can make them ill. Make sure they have lots of woodshavings and hay which they can bury themselves into to help them stay warm. You can also purchase hutch covers to place over the hutch during cold weather to add an extra layer of warmth and protection. During the winter months, you may want to consider bringing the guinea pigs indoors as it will be too cold for them to be outdoors during night as well as the day.

## A Suitable Diet

Guinea pig's teeth grow continuously throughout their life and need to be worn down and kept at the correct length and shape by eating grass, hay, high quality pellets and leafy green plants – if they don't eat the right sorts of food they can suffer from serious dental disease and gastrointestinal issues. They produce two types of droppings – hard dry pellets, and softer moist pellets which they eat directly from their bottom, and which are an essential part of their diet.

### Hay

This is the **most important part of a guinea pig's diet** and makes up around 80% of their daily food consumption. Guinea pigs must always have **unlimited** access to fresh, dust-free feeding hay, which must be replenished on a daily basis. Placing the hay into a rack above floor level helps to keep it clean.

### Pellets

High quality commercial guinea pig nuggets make up 10% of your guinea pig's daily dietary needs. For a healthy adult guinea pig, allow 1 tablespoon of nuggets per guinea pig per day, but take care to adjust the amount given according to individual guinea pigs needs, based on their lifestyle, activity levels, age, and state of health. Muesli-style foods are associated with health problems in guinea pigs and should not be fed. Feeding muesli can increase the risk of guinea pigs developing serious teeth and stomach problems (including obesity), which can cause suffering.

### Water

The guinea pigs must have access to a source of fresh water, which must be changed on a daily basis. In hot weather, the water may need to be changed multiple times a day. To help keep the water cool, place it in a shaded area. In cold weather, you must ensure that the water doesn't freeze over.

### Fresh vegetables

Guinea pigs should also have a variety of washed leafy greens. Guinea pigs are not able to make or store Vitamin C so vegetables such as kale, cabbage, broccoli, and spinach need to be provided daily. Offer them a variety of safe, washed leafy greens or weeds every day. **Don't feed them lawn mower clippings as these can upset their digestive system and make them ill.** A guinea pig's diet doesn't naturally include cereals, root vegetables or fruit but you can give them apples or root vegetables like carrots, in very small amounts as an occasional treat. Below is a list of some safe and unsafe fruit and veg for guinea pigs, there are many more though (too many to list here!), so if it's not on the list please research before feeding it to the guinea pigs! However, always introduce new foods and make any necessary changes gradually to avoid upsetting their digestive systems.

#### Safe Fruit and Veg

- Apples (do not feed the seeds or pips)
- Cabbage (in moderation)
- Spinach (in moderation)
- Watercress
- Rocket
- Kale
- Spring greens
- Courgette
- Carrot
- Dill
- Bell peppers (do not feed the seeds)
- Broccoli (in moderation)

#### Unsafe Fruit and Veg

- Avocado
- Fruit seeds, pits, or stones
- Citrus fruits
- Onion
- Rhubarb
- Rice
- Aubergine
- Potato
- Mushrooms
- Iceberg Lettuce
- Canned fruit or vegetables
- Lawn mower clippings



## Exhibition of normal behaviour patterns

Guinea pigs are active during the day and night – for up to 20 hours – and sleep for only short periods so they need to access all the things they need at all times: food, water, companion guinea pigs, safe hiding places and toys.

The guinea pigs will also enjoy untreated wooden toys to chew, such as fruit tree or willow sticks but avoid toys made of plastic, as they may be harmful if they chew or swallow them. Objects to manipulate such as straw/wicker/seagrass mats, baskets and balls are great for guinea pigs to investigate. Food wrapped in shredded paper and hay tucked in cardboard boxes will encourage the guinea pigs to explore. Guinea pigs are not very agile and are poor climbers, but they are inquisitive so if there are hazards within their environment, they may easily injure themselves.

In order to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of the guinea pigs, and allow them to exhibit species specific behaviours, you must provide them with enrichment. There are lots of different enrichment ideas you can give your guinea pigs, and a great place to look is on Pinterest!

A few examples include:

- guinea pig safe chew toys
- PVC tubes
- Cardboard boxes
- Tunnels
- Shredded newspaper

Enrichment is a great and fun way to bond with the guinea pigs as you watch them explore, play, and have fun! Creating enrichment would also be a fun lesson for the children!



## The need to be housed with, or apart, from other animals

Guinea pigs are very social and need to interact with other friendly guinea pigs as well as people. Unlike other social animals, guinea pigs tend not to engage in rough and tumble play but instead their play is based around movement. Guinea pigs will leap, run, and chase each other and you may also spot them suddenly jumping in the air, with all four feet off the ground, often turning 90° in mid-air. This is 'pop-corning' and will be seen when your pigs are excited but may also be displayed when they are very frightened and running away from something scary.

You must never keep a solitary guinea pig, unless direct a vet for medical purposes. Guinea pigs must always be in a group of at least a minimum of two individuals. Only ever house as many guinea pigs as you have space for to avoid overcrowding and aggression due to lack of space.

## Protection from pain, injury, suffering and disease

Guinea pigs feel pain in the same way as other mammals, including people, but they are not very good at showing outward signs of pain and may be suffering a great deal before you notice anything is wrong. It is very important that you get to know the guinea pigs' normal behaviour when they are fit and healthy. A change in the way a guinea pig normally behaves can be an early sign they are ill or in pain. If a guinea pig is not eating, is quieter or hiding more than usual, they are highly likely to be ill or in pain, you must contact a vet immediately.

Guinea pigs are vulnerable to many infectious diseases and other illnesses including vitamin C deficiency, urinary tract infections, breathing problems and swollen or sore foot pads. They are especially vulnerable to dental disease and if they are stressed, they are much more likely to become ill.

Feeding your guinea pigs the correct diet of mainly hay and/or grass will help prevent a lot of common diseases such as dental and gut disease. Check that your guinea pigs are eating every day and that they are passing plenty of dry droppings. If your guinea pig's eating or drinking habits change or the number of droppings gets less or stops, talk to your vet straight away as they could be seriously ill.



## **Daily Health Checks**

Twice a day, usually in the morning when you first let the guinea pigs out, and last thing before putting them to bed, you should visually health check them to ensure they are not showing any signs of illness or disease. This will allow you to manage and deal with any health issue before the problem becomes serious. You should physically health check you guinea pigs at a minimum of once a week.

What to look out for during the daily health checks:

### **Eyes**

Your guinea pig's eyes should be bright and clear. There shouldn't be any discharge or dullness. If you notice any discharge, it could be that your guinea pig has scratched its eye, or, if it is cloudy then the problem could be related to its teeth. Either way, if you notice that your guinea pig has a problem with its eye, a trip to the vet is recommended.

### **Ears**

The ears should be free of scabs and sores, brown material, or waxy buildups. They should generally be clean, and free of wounds.

### **Nose**

As with the eyes, the nose shouldn't be runny. If it is, it could be a sign something isn't right.

### **Teeth**

Should not be overgrown, chipped or broken. The top and bottom two should both be the same length as the one directly next to it.

### **Body**

Is the skin free of wounds, lumps, and swellings? Does your guinea pig squirm when you touch a particular area of their torso or back?

### **Fur**

Part the fur with your fingers and check for white flakes, brown material, sores, wounds, and insects.

### **Feet**

There shouldn't be any lumps between your guinea pig's digits, and the feet should be free of cuts and swellings. The fur on the bottoms of the feet should be free from matting. Their claws should also be a suitable length and not curling.

### **Rear End**

Your vet is the best person to speak to if your guinea pig's rear is frequently soiled. It is especially important to check twice daily for any soiling in the summer. At this time of year areas of dirtiness will quickly attract flies to lay their eggs, which hatch into maggots within a matter of hours. This causes a condition known as flystrike, and it can very quickly prove fatal to your guinea pigs.



## Health checklist

You should carry out a health check every day to make sure that your guinea pigs are happy and healthy.

- Watch your guinea pigs at feeding time to check that they are eating without any difficulty and their normal amount. You can also make sure that their chin isn't wet after they have eaten or that they are drooling. If you do spot any of these signs it is important to seek veterinary advice immediately.
- Look at their eyes, ears and nose to make sure there isn't any discharge. A small amount of white discharge around the eyes is commonly seen when a guinea pig is grooming themselves, but if this increases or decreases, or there is a discharge at other times, it may be a sign that your guinea pig is ill.
- Check feet for signs of sores or red patches.
- Any scratching or rubbing of ears or head shaking may be an indication of ear mites.
- Breathing should be regular and quiet.
- They should move well without any lameness or appearing to be in pain.
- Their coat should be in good condition as well as their skin. Check they are not scratching or rubbing their ears as this can be a sign of mites.
- Teeth shouldn't be overgrown, broken or loose. If you see any problems seek advice from a vet – only a vet should correct overgrown or misaligned teeth.
- Nails shouldn't be overlong or damaged.
- They should be able to urinate without any pain and there should be no blood in their urine.
- Droppings should be small, elongated and firm pellets. If the amount of droppings reduces, stops or changes – e.g. becomes loose – then seek veterinary advice immediately.

## **Cleaning**

The guinea pig hutch and run need to be cleaned regularly to prevent disease. It is important to keep your guinea pig hutch clean as a build-up of droppings will cause a build-up of faeces and urine which will attract flies. This could lead to flystrike which can be fatal in guinea pigs.

The guinea pig hutch should be spot cleaned on a daily basis, removing any visible faeces, and replacing substrate as necessary. The hutch will need a full clean every week. To do this, remove all the substrate and disinfect the hutch with the Safe4 disinfectant spray. Then place fresh substrate into the hutch. Cleaning is potentially stressful for guinea pigs so after cleaning, a small amount of the old but unsoiled bedding should be placed back into the toilet area of the hutch as this will smell familiar to the guinea pigs and help to reduce the stress caused by cleaning.

You will also need to check the smaller hutch run, as well as the larger run, for any faeces and remove these on a daily basis. This is important, not only to keep the hutch and run clean, but also to prevent people from treading in guinea pig poop and walking into back into the school.

Any waste from the guinea pigs must be put into a black bin bag. After use, the bin bag must be tied off and placed into the black wheely bin on the farm.

Food and water feeders must also be cleaned regularly to prevent the build-up of bacteria.

## **Common Guinea Pig Illnesses**

### **Scurvy**

Vitamin C is incredibly important to guinea pigs. Like humans, guinea pigs cannot manufacture their own vitamin C, so they need a certain amount of it each day or they'll suffer from dental problems, growth problems, and a poor immune system. Unfortunately, you can't give guinea pigs lots of vitamin C on one day and hope that it will be enough to last them several. As guinea pigs can't store vitamin C and will just excrete out any extra that you've added that exceeds their daily requirement. Daily requirements for adult guinea pigs are 10 mg per day, and those that need a bit more (such as sick, pregnant, or growing guinea pigs) are 30mg per day.

Scurvy is caused by a lack of vitamin C, and symptoms include the cessation of growth in young guinea pigs, joint swelling, and a stiffness of joints to the extent that they can't use their back legs independently and hop around in a rabbit-like fashion. Extreme versions of vitamin C deficiency involve paralysis of the back legs, hunched postures, and severe breeding problems such as abortions and stillbirths. A lack of vitamin C makes your guinea pigs really vulnerable to infection, so we can't stress enough how important it is to keep your guinea pigs' vitamin C levels high.

Although scurvy is a severe vitamin C deficiency, there are some forms of vitamin C deficiency that are less easy to spot. Guinea pigs with low levels of the deficiency have problems such as stunted growth and reduced lifespans and may also be more susceptible to infection.

There are several foods that aren't sufficient sources of vitamin C for growing guinea pigs or pregnant (or milk-feeding) sows. Carrots, beetroot, and apples don't have enough in for your guinea pigs, so instead we recommend broccoli, kale, and cabbage. Another thing that can be done is crumbling a vitamin C tablet into your guinea pigs' water, or using dry food enriched with the vitamin.

## **Heatstroke**

Any guinea pig exposed to high temperatures could suffer from heat stroke, for example over 25 or 26 degrees celsius. With their thick fur and inability to sweat, it's really important that you watch out for your guinea pigs in the summer and keep them out of direct sunlight, especially if they're being kept indoors.

If your guinea pig is lying down and breathing very rapidly, then you'll need to put a bit of cool (but not icy) water onto it to help it cool down, and move it into a cool spot, preferably one that has a nice breeze. If it's still panting, put a bit more of this cool water on it and keep a close eye on your pet. To help prevent heatstroke, give your guinea pigs plenty of shaded areas to rest in and keep them in a well-ventilated area out of direct sunlight.

## **Overgrown Teeth**

One of the key symptoms of overgrown teeth is that your guinea pig will stop eating. They may also dribble and have sores around their mouth and on their body where the teeth have cut them. They will need to be taken to a vet to have their teeth worn down.

## **Urinary Problems**

It's often difficult to notice problems with your guinea pigs' urination, especially when you have a large group of them living together. In your regular check-ups, make sure to gently feel for any stones just under your guinea pigs' skin, and be on the look-out for a distended bladder. In such cases, instead of being their usual soft and squishy self, your guinea pigs stomach will be rather firm.

It's also a good idea to have a look at your guinea pig's bedding when you're cleaning them out, as this may be your first sign that something is wrong. Signs of blood or diarrhoea should be investigated quickly. It's advisable to give all your guinea pigs a thorough checking over if you do see any of these signs.

## **Lice**

Lice are common insects that can live on your guinea pig. Running lice are small lice that live on your guinea pigs' hair and skin. They are about a millimetre long and usually live near the base of the guinea pig's hair. Although they live off skin and grease rather than sucking blood, they make guinea pigs uncomfortable and in some cases your pets may develop an allergy to them and may start biting themselves as a result. Thankfully, running lice are easily to get rid of with the right treatment. Often this will be an anti-lice shampoo bought from a good pet shop or your local vet. Be aware that these parasites are really contagious, so you'll need to give all your guinea pigs this treatment at the same time. It's also advisable to thoroughly clean out the guinea pigs' hutch whilst they're having their treatment in order to minimise the chance of them getting re-infected.

## Daily Husbandry Guidelines

The guinea pigs require two visits per day. One AM and one PM visit. Always ensure that you shut the door of the run behind you after entering/ leaving!

**You must wash your hands and disinfect your shoes (using Safe4) before and after working with the guinea pigs.**

### Daily AM Jobs: 8am – 8:30am

- The guinea pig run must be checked daily to ensure that there are no areas where the guinea pigs could injure themselves or any areas that they could escape from. Check there are no signs of entry from vermin.
- The run must also be checked for damage which may cause harm to staff or children, such as loose strands of wire.
- Any signs of damage must be reported to senior staff immediately. The guinea pigs must not be let out the hutch if you deem the run to be unsafe or unsuitable for containment.
- Once the run has been checked, the guinea pigs can be let out of the hutch and into the run.
- This is a great chance to visually health check the guinea pigs. Look out for any signs of injury, illness, or disease. Any signs of illness must be reported to senior staff immediately.
- Next, please ensure the guinea pigs are fed their nuggets in the AM visit. Roughly 1 tablespoon of nuggets per guinea pig, per day is enough. Also ensure they have lots of fresh, clean hay (don't get confused with straw!)
- The guinea pigs will now need fresh water. The water bottle should be kept inside the hutch.
- Wear gloves and spot-clean the guinea pig hutch and run. Remove any soiled bedding and poo from the tray of the guinea pig house and replace with a light layer of bedding, as this is changed daily. Also spot clean the run picking up any faeces on the grass. Dirty bedding and faeces must go into a black bag, which should then be tied off and placed into the black wheely bin.

### Daily PM Jobs: 6pm – 6:30pm

- Visually health check the guinea pigs looking out for any signs of injury, illness, or disease. Any signs of illness must be reported to senior staff immediately.
- Now, round up the guinea pigs and lock them inside the small run beneath the hutch. If nighttime temperatures are above 15 degrees Celsius, please leave the sliding door (at the top of the ramp) open. If night time temperatures are below 15 degrees Celsius, please close the sliding door, shutting the guinea pigs into the house. Ensure they have plenty of hay and bedding to keep warm.
- They also need fresh veg daily. A handful of veg each is plenty; this can be given in the PM visit to give them something to eat overnight.
- Ensure they have lots of fresh, clean hay (don't get confused with straw!).
- Spot clean the run picking up any faeces on the grass. Put any poo into a small white plastic bag, which should then be tied off and placed into the black wheely bin.



## Guinea Pig Care Calendar

The daily, weekly, and monthly jobs for caring for guinea pigs.

Daily	Weekly or Fortnightly	Monthly
Check the run for signs of damage	Full clean and disinfect hutch	Nail trimming (only if needed)
Visual health checks	Enrichment 3 – 4 times per week	
Food, fresh water and fresh veg		
Spot clean hutch and run area		
Close the main metal gate (hutch doors stays open so they are free to run around)		

## Guinea pig Shopping List

Below is a guide to the products you will need on a regular basis to care for the guinea pigs.

- Guinea pig safe woodshavings
- Safe4 disinfectant
- Black bin bags
- Disposable gloves
- High quality pellets
- Feeding Hay
- Fresh vegetables

St Mark's CofE Primary School Farm

Animal Risk Assessment: Domestic Guinea Pig



<b>Risk Assessment</b>		Species: Domestic Guinea Pig ( <i>Cavia porcellus</i> )						
St Mark's CofE Primary School		Assessment by: Tom Parker				Date: 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2023		
Review Date: June 2024		Approved by: Charles Applegate				Date: 20 <sup>th</sup> June 2023		
<b>Hazard/Risk</b>	<b>Who is at risk?</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Severity</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Mitigations</b>	<b>Additional Control Measures</b>	<b>Completed</b>	
Zoonotic diseases	Staff, Students, Parents, Visitors	1	6	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do not to touch your face or put anything in your mouth whilst working with the guinea pigs.</li> <li>- Wash hands immediately after working with the guinea pigs.</li> <li>- Eating and drinking is not permitted on the farm.</li> <li>- Hand-washing signage is in place to remind everyone to wash their hands.</li> <li>- Hand gel may be used for immediate visible contamination, but additional handwashing remains compulsory.</li> <li>- Fresh cuts and grazes are covered before working with the guinea pigs.</li> <li>- Use the disinfectant Safe4 spray on your footwear when entering or leaving the guinea pig run.</li> <li>- Anyone with a compromised immune system are not permitted to work with the guinea pigs.</li> <li>- The guinea pig hutch, run and equipment is disinfected regularly.</li> <li>- Students are not permitted to play in areas where guinea pig waste is disposed of.</li> </ul>			

<p>Injury from the guinea pigs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bites</li> <li>- Scratches</li> </ul>	<p>Staff, Students, Parents, Visitors</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anyone, including students, handling the guinea pigs are trained by competent staff in the correct handling and restraint procedure.</li> <li>- Do not hold the guinea pigs near your face when handling.</li> <li>- Do not poke fingers through the mesh of the run.</li> <li>- Keep noise level to a minimum when handling the guinea pigs.</li> <li>- Claws are trimmed if necessary.</li> <li>- Medical treatments, husbandry procedures (such as nail trimming) as well as prophylactic healthcare (such as faecal screening) is to be carried out by trained staff only.</li> <li>- Any guinea pigs that are consistently aggressive towards the children will be re-homed.</li> <li>- Any injuries from the guinea pigs are washed and immediately attended to by a first aid trained member of staff.</li> </ul>		
<p>Minor Injuries from the guinea pig enclosure and equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scratches</li> <li>- Cuts</li> <li>- Splinters</li> <li>- Bruises</li> <li>- Pinched fingers in bolts and padlocks</li> <li>- Trips and falls</li> </ul>	<p>Staff, Students, Parents, Visitors</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The guinea pig hutch and run are checked on a regular schedule for maintenance issues.</li> <li>- Wear gloves if handling any broken wire or mesh.</li> <li>- Lightweight food bowls, drinkers and appropriately sized tools are used.</li> <li>- Students are briefed on safe tool use.</li> <li>- Tools are always stored correctly and safely after use.</li> <li>- Students are not permitted to ride in wheelbarrows.</li> <li>- Report/ treat any broken or stiff padlocks or bolts immediately.</li> <li>- Keep walkways and working areas clear from unnecessary debris, clutter, and equipment.</li> <li>- Suitable footwear must be worn on the farm.</li> <li>- Running is not permitted at any time on the farm.</li> </ul>		

<p>Major Injuries from the guinea pig enclosure and equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head or eye injury</li> <li>- Back injury</li> </ul>	<p>Staff, Students, Parents, Visitors</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The guinea pig hutch and run are checked on a regular schedule for maintenance issues.</li> <li>- Lightweight food bowls, drinkers and appropriately sized tools are used.</li> <li>- Anyone working with the guinea pigs is briefed on safe tool use.</li> <li>- You are not permitted to ride in wheelbarrows.</li> <li>- You are only permitted to carry heavy items, such as bedding, if you have received the correct training.</li> <li>- Students are prohibited from carrying heavy items.</li> <li>- Items too heavy to carry must be transported by other means, such as in a wheelbarrow.</li> <li>- Keep walkways and working areas clear from unnecessary debris, clutter, and equipment.</li> <li>- Suitable footwear must be worn on the farm.</li> <li>- Running is not permitted at any time on the farm.</li> </ul>		
<p>Allergic reactions and respiratory problems. Inhalation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dust, fur, or bedding materials.</li> <li>- Food such as hay</li> </ul>	<p>Staff, Students, Parents, Visitors</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anyone with known allergies or respiratory issues are not permitted to carry out potentially risky tasks such as adding or removing bedding to the guinea pig hutch or feeding hay.</li> <li>- Students 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 guinea pigs.</li> <li>- A low dust bedding will be used for the guinea pig hutch.</li> <li>- A low dust hay will be used to feed the guinea pigs.</li> </ul>		

<p>Illness or injury from contact with guinea pig health care products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allergic reactions</li> <li>- Skin irritation</li> <li>- Poisoning</li> </ul>	<p>Staff, Students, Parents, Visitors</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All guinea pig cleaning and health care products are stored safely in accordance with COSHH regulations.</li> <li>- Any products not covered by COSHH must be stored and used in accordance with the manufacture's guidelines and/or product data sheet.</li> <li>- Students are only permitted to use low-risk products.</li> <li>- Gloves must be worn, when necessary, as per manufacturers guidelines for any products used.</li> <li>- Fresh cuts and grazes are covered before working with health care products.</li> <li>- Any guinea pig medications must be mixed and administered and stored with strict supervision by staff.</li> <li>- You wash your hands immediately upon completion of cleaning/ health care tasks.</li> </ul>		
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Risk Rating = Likelihood x severity	
<p>Likelihood:</p> <p>1 = highly improbable occurrence</p> <p>2 = occasional occurrence</p> <p>4 = fairly frequent occurrence</p> <p>6 = frequent and regular occurrence</p>	<p>Severity:</p> <p>1 = negligible injuries</p> <p>2 = minor injuries</p> <p>6 = major injuries</p> <p>10 = multiple major injuries</p>

Risk Rating = Likelihood x Severity
Greater than 17 (requires immediate action or activity must stop)
12 – 16 (High risk)
8 – 11 (Moderate risk)
4 – 7 (Low risk)
1 – 3 (Very low risk)