

THE TINY PONY PROJECT

SAFE, CALM, KIND

Learning Empathy Through Ponies

A primary school outreach workshop exploring empathy, kindness, boundaries, emotional awareness and respectful relationships through a memorable encounter with three tiny ponies.

Education first. Ponies make it memorable.

School Information Pack

KS1 | KS2 | Adaptable for pupils with additional needs

A Different Way to Learn, A Natural Place to Grow.

www.thetinyponyproject.co.uk

1. Programme Overview

What can a pony teach us about kindness? Quite a lot.

Ponies do not use words to tell us how they are feeling. To create a positive interaction, we have to slow down, observe, pay attention to body language and consider what the individual pony might need from us.

Sometimes a pony chooses to come closer. Sometimes it needs space. Sometimes we simply need to wait. Safe, Calm, Kind turns those moments into a structured learning experience and then helps children transfer the same principles to their relationships with other people.

Empathy is not simply meaning well. It involves noticing another individual's communication, considering their needs and being willing to adapt our own behaviour.

The workshop is designed as an experiential educational visit rather than therapy or clinical intervention. It has defined learning outcomes and is designed with reference to current Relationships Education / RSHE and PSHE expectations in England.

The three workshop questions

SAFE	What can I notice? Observe behaviour and communication before making assumptions.
CALM	What can I change? Consider voice, movement, pace, distance and our own response.
KIND	What might somebody else need? Respond respectfully to the individual rather than simply pursuing what we want.

Learning sequence: NOTICE → CONSIDER → ADJUST → TRANSFER

2. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the workshop, pupils should have had the opportunity to:

- recognise observable behavioural signals that may indicate comfort, uncertainty, worry or overwhelm;
- understand that behaviour can communicate information about feelings and needs;
- recognise that our own behaviour can affect those around us;
- practise adapting voice, movement, proximity and pace to support a safer interaction;
- explore empathy and perspective-taking by considering another individual's experience;
- practise patience, respectful communication and recognition of boundaries;
- understand that people can experience and communicate 'big feelings' differently;
- identify simple ways to respond when another person appears anxious, overwhelmed or uncomfortable;
- distinguish between what they can observe and what they are assuming;
- transfer learning from the pony encounter to friendships and everyday school relationships.

We do not expect the pony to change its feelings for us. We change our behaviour to help create the conditions in which the pony may feel safer.

KS1 emphasis

- simple recognition of feelings and body-language cues;
- kindness, calm movement and personal space;
- understanding that different individuals may like different things;
- giving one example of how to help someone who appears worried or upset.

KS2 emphasis

- behaviour as communication and the difference between observation and assumption;
- perspective-taking and individual differences;
- boundaries and adapting communication;
- applying Safe, Calm, Kind to more complex friendship and school situations.

3. Example Workshop Structure

Typical delivery: approximately 75-90 minutes, adaptable to the school timetable.

Phase 1 - Understanding the Pony | ~15 min

Classroom introduction to pony behaviour, body language, feelings and empathy. Children begin by describing what they can observe before considering what the behaviour might mean. **Core message: Empathy starts with noticing.**

Phase 2 - Preparing Ourselves + Challenge | ~10-15 min

Introduce Safe, Calm, Kind. Children practise slowing their bodies and voices, discuss boundaries, and begin the Safe, Calm, Kind poster/activity challenge. They are asked to leave it unfinished and become 'detectives' during the pony encounter.

Phase 3 - Meeting the Tiny Ponies | ~25-40 min

Small groups visit the pony setup while classmates remain with school staff and continue their activity. Pupils remain outside the secure enclosure at all times. The ponies remain loose inside and choose whether to approach. Children practise observing, waiting and responding.

Phase 4 - Ponies to People | ~10-15 min

Whole-class reflection: What did we notice? Did every pony want the same thing? What happened when we waited or changed our behaviour? The facilitator then helps pupils transfer these ideas to human relationships.

Phase 5 - Follow-On Challenge

Pupils finish their Safe, Calm, Kind work after the visit. The activity can be used for classroom display and entry into the Tiny Pony Project inter-school Safe, Calm, Kind challenge.

Physical contact with a pony is not an intended learning outcome. Watching, noticing and appropriately respecting a pony that chooses not to approach are successful participation.

4. Inclusive Delivery & SEND Adaptation

Safe, Calm, Kind is designed as one inclusive workshop with built-in flexibility rather than a separate SEND version. Pupils can participate meaningfully in different ways.

Interaction is invited, never required.

Children may participate through **watching, listening, speaking, pointing, choosing, drawing, observing or interacting**. A pupil does not need to touch or closely approach a pony to participate successfully.

Three flexible levels of participation

WATCH	Observe from a comfortable distance; notice ears, movement, feet, head position and distance.
CONNECT	Move closer if comfortable and observe whether a pony voluntarily approaches the boundary.
INTERACT	Where appropriate and safe, respond to a pony that chooses to approach the barrier. Interaction remains supervised and optional.

Possible adaptations

- a visual 'What Will Happen?' schedule supplied before the visit;
- choice-based or visual communication instead of requiring verbal answers;
- observation from further away;
- use of ear defenders or other usual pupil supports;
- a familiar school adult accompanying the pupil;
- flexible position in the rotation where waiting is difficult;
- returning indoors if the environment becomes overwhelming;
- poster/activity options that do not depend on reading, writing or artistic ability.

The same principle applies to both child and pony: **we respect an individual's boundaries rather than forcing participation.**

5. Educational Relevance

The programme is designed to complement, not replace, a school's planned PSHE/Relationships Education curriculum. The revised Department for Education statutory RSHE guidance came into effect in England on 1 September 2026. Safe, Calm, Kind supports themes within respectful relationships, kindness, boundaries, communication, emotional awareness and consideration of one's impact on other people.

The PSHE Association's 2026 Programme of Study integrates the updated statutory RSHE requirements and provides key-stage learning opportunities. Its 2026 Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND supports adaptable and accessible PSHE learning.

Relevant areas supported by the workshop include:

- caring and respectful relationships;
- kindness, mutual respect and consideration;
- practical skills for respectful communication;
- personal boundaries and permission;
- recognising and discussing feelings;
- considering the effect of one's behaviour on others;
- perspective-taking and individual differences;
- self-awareness and managing feelings.

Important positioning

The Tiny Pony Project does not claim that the workshop is formally accredited or endorsed by the Department for Education or the PSHE Association. It is designed **with reference to** current statutory guidance and PSHE planning frameworks.

Reference sources: Department for Education, *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education - statutory guidance* (effective 1 September 2026); PSHE Association, *2026 Programme of Study for PSHE education (KS1-5)*; PSHE Association, *2026 Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND*.

6. How the Pony Encounter Operates

The school visit uses a controlled separation model designed to support both pupil safety and pony welfare.

Pupils never enter the pony enclosure. Ponies are never taken amongst groups of pupils.

Three miniature ponies remain **loose inside a temporary secure enclosure constructed from suitable interconnected metal livestock/sheep hurdles**. Pupils remain outside the enclosure throughout.

A designated side of the enclosure is used for pupil observation and, where appropriate, controlled interaction. The ponies can move freely within their own space and choose whether or not to approach the boundary.

This is the ponies' space. Children are not entitled to enter it or to make a pony interact. That physical boundary becomes a practical part of the lesson about choice, patience and respecting another individual's space.

Before approaching

- every pupil receives an age-appropriate safety and body-language briefing;
- pupils are taught safe positioning of hands and fingers around the hurdles;
- children approach only the designated interaction area when invited;
- running, shouting, grabbing, reaching after a retreating pony and deliberately startling the ponies are not permitted;
- pupils are taught to observe body language before considering interaction;
- if a pony moves away, the child allows it to move away.

Continuous active observation

Tiny Pony Project facilitators continuously monitor pony body language, pupil behaviour, hand positioning, interactions between ponies and changes in the surrounding environment. An interaction may be redirected, paused or stopped immediately.

Simple pupil rule: Pony comes to us - we don't reach after the pony.

7. Safety, Welfare & Hygiene Overview

Pony welfare

- only ponies assessed as suitable for the visit and environment attend;
- ponies are checked before travel and monitored throughout;
- water, forage, rest and weather protection are provided as appropriate;
- no pony is required to interact with a particular number of pupils;
- a pony may be withdrawn from interaction at any time;
- pony welfare and safety take priority over completion of the planned activity.

Hygiene

- The Tiny Pony Project provides a portable handwashing facility with running water and suitable handwashing provisions;
- pupils wash their hands thoroughly following animal contact and before eating or drinking;
- eating and drinking are not permitted within the designated pony activity area;
- school staff support pupils who require assistance with handwashing.

Weather and ground conditions

- the proposed site is agreed before the visit and checked again on arrival;
- the programme can be adapted for ordinary winter conditions;
- unsafe ground, high winds, lightning, dangerous ice, extreme conditions or unsafe towing conditions may require relocation, postponement or cancellation.

Dynamic risk assessment

The facilitator may alter, pause or terminate activity where circumstances change, including pony behaviour, pupil behaviour, weather, ground conditions, crowding, equipment or other emerging hazards.

8. Emergency Arrangements

Emergency arrangements are agreed with the school before pupil activity begins. On arrival, the Tiny Pony Project lead and nominated school contact confirm the agreed exit route, vehicle/trailer access, school emergency arrangements and any site-specific instructions.

In an emergency:

- the activity stops immediately;
- pupil access to the pony area is stopped and the pony enclosure is kept secure;
- the school accounts for and manages its pupils under its own emergency procedures;
- The Tiny Pony Project accounts for its personnel and ponies;
- the pre-agreed exit/procedure is followed;
- where safe and appropriate, ponies are loaded and the Tiny Pony Project leaves the site promptly using the agreed route;
- if immediate departure is unsafe or impossible, ponies remain in the safest secure location available and emergency-service/school instructions take precedence;
- relevant incidents are recorded and reported afterwards.

The towing vehicle and trailer are positioned with the agreed emergency route in mind and must not obstruct emergency access.

Safeguarding and supervision

School safeguarding procedures remain in operation throughout the visit. School staff retain supervision of pupils and accompany participating groups. Tiny Pony Project staff lead the equine and workshop elements and do not take unsupervised responsibility for individual pupils.

9. Evidence of Learning & Impact

Assessment is deliberately light-touch and inclusive. The workshop does not clinically assess mental health or claim therapeutic outcomes.

Before and after

At the beginning and end, pupils can be asked the same simple question: '**What does being kind mean?**' This provides an opportunity to notice whether thinking has broadened from general ideas such as 'being nice' towards concepts such as giving space, noticing discomfort, waiting, listening and adapting behaviour.

During the pony encounter

- **NOTICE:** identify something observable about the pony;
- **CONSIDER:** think about what that behaviour might communicate without assuming certainty;
- **ADJUST:** change one's own behaviour appropriately;
- **TRANSFER:** relate the principle to another human interaction.

Safe, Calm, Kind Challenge

Pupils create a poster, comic, slogan, collage, short piece of writing or other agreed response around the question: '**How can we help others feel safe, calm and welcome?**' The idea communicated matters more than artistic or writing ability.

Teacher feedback

Schools can be invited to complete a short post-visit feedback form covering learning objectives, engagement, transfer to human relationships, overall rating and optional observations. Aggregated, anonymised results can help The Tiny Pony Project evaluate and improve the programme.

10. Practical Information for Schools

The Tiny Pony Project provides

- three miniature ponies and appropriate transport;
- two trained facilitators, supported by a volunteer;
- temporary secure pony enclosure and associated equipment;
- portable handwashing provision;
- classroom teaching and pupil activity resources;
- teacher/follow-on resources;
- master risk assessment and supporting safety information.

The school provides

- suitable vehicle and trailer access;
- a pre-agreed outdoor location with suitable ground and sufficient controlled space;
- classroom or appropriate teaching space;
- school staff supervision throughout;
- normal school first-aid and safeguarding arrangements;
- relevant information needed to make reasonable participation adjustments;
- a clear emergency access/exit route.

Working prices

Half-Day School Visit	£450
Full-Day School Visit	£650

Working prices include travel within 30 miles of The Tiny Pony Project. Visits further afield, up to approximately 100 miles, can be quoted according to distance and additional travel requirements.

Final pupil capacity and daily rotation arrangements are agreed with each school according to timetable, age group, site and pony welfare.

SAFE, CALM, KIND

Learning Empathy Through Ponies

Notice. Consider. Adjust. Transfer.

Safe, Calm, Kind transforms an exciting encounter with a pony into a structured learning experience about empathy, relationships and emotional awareness. Children practise noticing another individual's communication, pausing before reacting and adapting their own behaviour - then consider how those same skills can help them build kinder, more respectful relationships with people.

For school enquiries and bookings

The Tiny Pony Project

www.thetinyponyproject.co.uk

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Supporting documentation available to schools includes the full master risk assessment, safeguarding information, insurance documentation and curriculum information.