

## SUBJECT: RATS

RECIPIENTS: LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS

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- Rats are usually most active at night-time and they will often leave clear evidence behind. Damage to furnishings and cables by gnawing, visible droppings around food sources and scratching noises at night all suggest rat activity.
- It may sound obvious, but prevention is better than cure. Try not to attract them in the first place by maintaining good standards of hygiene in kitchens and food storage areas such as cupboards and larders.
- Keep dry pet food in sealed plastic tubs or plastic/metal bins with lids.
- Deal with leftover food promptly by storing in a fridge or sealed container.
- Clear up crumbs and spills promptly and wash down any/all food preparation areas and counter tops regularly with piping hot water and detergent.
- Don't allow bird food to accumulate on bird tables for long periods of time.
- Dispose of any uneaten food from pet trays promptly and never put meat leftovers onto a compost heap.
- A plastic rubbish bag or sack on its own isn't suitable for waste food disposal - always ensure waste food is disposed of in a secure bin (plastic or metal) with a lid.
- Rats tend to nest in places that don't have much human traffic, including loft spaces, sheds and outbuildings. Regular sorting/cleaning of under-inhabited areas will reduce the risk of rat nests becoming established.
- Rats have also been known to make nests in cavity walls and to shred insulating material to make nests, so you're likely to hear scratching sounds while this activity takes place.
- Never try to corner a rat – they have sharp teeth and powerful jaws and could bite or scratch to defend themselves. Rat bites carry a [risk of infection](#) and also the possibility of Leptospirosis (Weil's disease), tetanus or rabies. See [POEL 17](#) for general advice on taking precautions against infection.
- If you have been bitten by a rat, consult your GP promptly for advice and appropriate treatment if necessary.
- If you discover rats at your property or workplace, refer to your District Council for advice on how to deal with them. Click [here](#) to find the number/website for your area.