

ANIMALS IN OUR SERVICE



Reviewed May 2023

Page 1 of 2

POLICY STATEMENT

Our service welcomes the introduction of animals in the preschool environment to encourage responsible ownership and care of pets, animals or birds that may reside in, or visit, our service.

Role modelling of safe behaviours with animals and guidance in caring for the needs of animals is beneficial for all children.

Considerations towards allergies and/or fears of animals will also be established as each new group attends a new school year, so we can factor this in when visits occur of pets, or removal of classroom pets to another room / area of the preschool as required.

The guide to the National Quality Framework recognises the role in supporting children to understand and appreciate the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land.

GOALS

Provide a safe, clean and humane environment for all animals and birds that visit or reside as pets in our service.

Ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children is maintained at all times as they interact or engage with animal that reside or are visiting the service.

Ensure children are aware of behaviours and safety precautions before engaging with animals, eg: don't get too close, only pat where owner has suggested if allowed, don't put our faces too close to the animal's head / mouth / claws.

Ensure children have the opportunity to learn about our pets and how we stay safe when interacting with them, including visiting pets.

Ensure there are procedures in place for removing unwanted animals, pests or vermin that may cause a health / safety concern (ie: mosquitos, mice, stray dogs, stray cats, injured wildlife, ducks, birds, etc).

STRATEGIES

SERVICE PETS

If practical, place notification of pets present in our service into family handbook for new families. Request families to communicate any concerns, if any, regarding the pet's presence during their child's care.

Review individual child needs in relation to phobias, allergies, fears of animals to ensure children are supervised and supported when animals are present at the service.

Review individual child interests and animals at home in relation to relatability, knowledge and familiarisation with animals which may reside or visit the service.

Establish how the pets will be cared for during weekends and holiday periods.

Establish the benefits and advantages of having a service pet within the service, considering the responsibility of feeding, cleaning, exercising, etc.

Ensure all staff and families are accepting of having the pet in the service and have access to the risk assessment associated with the service pet.

Ensure risk management includes hand washing, hygiene, containment and supervision.

INVITED FAMILY PET VISITS

Animals and pets visiting the service are the responsibility of the owner at all times.

Pet visits should be arranged with the class teacher, and at the teacher's discretion in association with the Nominated Supervisor. Where possible, pet visits should be conducted outdoors, avoiding indoor furnishings and equipment.

Animals and pets visiting the service should be appropriately restrained, and all children must be closely supervised by an educator at all times.

The general health of the animal should be assessed and considered prior to visiting the preschool. Ringworm, lice, toxoplasmosis, open wounds, worm infections, etc can be transferred from animals to humans.

Animal faeces must be collected, disposed of and the area disinfected. Clean drinking water available for animals as required.

The visit length of time should be established and adhered to, to ensure the children and animals are not overwhelmed or over-handled during their visit at the service.

INCURSIONS (REPTILES, PETTING FARM, ETC)

Organised incursions for reptiles, insects, petting farm, etc must only be conducted upon review of a complete risk assessment by the presenter.

The visit length of time should be established and adhered to, to ensure the children and animals are not overwhelmed or over-handled during their visit at the service.

UNWELCOMED PESTS, VERMIN, STRAY ANIMALS

There may be situations that spontaneously occur, eg bird flown into classroom, stray cat in playground. Educators may use this as a spontaneous learning experience for the children, whilst at all times ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the children.

If an animal or bird is potentially dangerous, such as a snake or spider, educators will contact an appropriate authority for assistance. In NSW this authority is the Office of Environment and Heritage (131 555) or NSW Wildlife Information (1300 094 797).

The animal's movements should be monitored to ensure a speedy and efficient capture by a professional, but priority is to be given to educator, child and family safety. At no time is the potentially dangerous animal, insect or bird to be approached or touched by educators, children or families.

Educators will be responsible for assessing any situation in the service where animals are involved to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children, family and animals.

Pest control and extermination to be established by a licenced and registered pest professional, out of preschool service hours. Chemicals, baits and traps should be avoided where possible to

ANIMALS IN OUR SERVICE



reduce chance of children coming into contact with the risks associated with pest control.

ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

Guide dogs, Hearing dogs, Police dogs and assistance animals visiting our service will always be welcome at our service.

HYGIENE AND SAFETY

Appropriate handwashing methods should be modelled and monitored by educators for all children and staff before and after handling animals.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Nominated Supervisor responsibilities

- I. Providing written consent to accept the role of Nominated Supervisor.
- II. Ensuring that, in their absence from the service premises, a Responsible Person is placed in day-to-day charge of the service.
- III. Ensure they have a sound understanding of the role of being placed in day-to-day charge of the service.
- IV. Ensuring that the name and position of the person being placed in day-to-day charge of the service is displayed and easily visible from the main entrance of the service.
- V. Developing rosters in accordance with the availability of Responsible Persons, hours of operations and the attendance patterns of children.
- VI. Notifying the Approved Provider and the Regulatory Authority within 7 days of any changes to their personal situation, including a change in mailing address, circumstances that affect their status as fit and proper, such as the suspension or cancellation of a Working with Children Check card or teacher registration, or if they are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Responsible Person responsibilities

- I. Providing written consent to accept the role of Responsible Person.
- II. Checking that the name and position of the Responsible Person in charge of the service is displayed and easily visible from the main entrance of the service.
- III. Ensuring they have a sound understanding of the role of Responsible Person.
- IV. Understanding that a Responsible Person placed in day-to-day charge of an approved service does not have the same responsibilities under the National Law as the Nominated Supervisor.

Family's responsibilities

- I. Reading and understanding of this policy.
- II. Being aware of the Responsible Person at the service on a daily basis.

RELATED GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS, LEGISLATION

National Quality Standards

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice
Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
Quality Area 3: Physical Environment

Child Safe Standards

Standard 1: Child safety is embedded in the organisational leadership, governance and culture.
Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved.
Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.
Standard 9: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.
Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

Legislation

Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 77, 113, 168
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979
Animal Welfare Act NSW

Sources

Animal Welfare League NSW
ACECQA – Keeping Pets and Animals in Education and Care Services

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years. Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved. In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.