



Animal Policy

Introduction:

Responsible ownership of pets, animals or birds that may reside at the Education and Care Service or visit the premises is vital. Role models of appropriate behaviours with animals and guidance in caring for the needs of animals is beneficial for children. This policy also considers the management of unwanted visitors such as pests and vermin.

The Guide to the National Quality Framework recognises the services role in supporting children to understand and appreciate the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land (Early Years Learning Framework, Framework for School Age Care).

◁ Element 3.2.3 The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

Aim:-

The Education and Care Service will:

- ◁ Provide a safe, clean and humane environment for all animals and birds that visit or reside at the service.
- ◁ Ensure that the health and wellbeing of children is being maintained when engaging with animals.
- ◁ Provide an animal education programme where opportunities are available for children to learn about, appreciate, respect and care for living creatures
- ◁ Ensure pest control measures are regularly undertaken; and
- ◁ Ensure there are procedures in place for removing unwanted animals, pests and vermin from the premises.

Implementation:-

Centre Pets and Invited Visitors

Prior to commencing ownership of or visits by animals, the service will:

- ◁ Consult families,
- ◁ Complete a risk benefit/assessment tool,
- ◁ Complete a risk management plan
- ◁ Consider the following questions in the decision making process:
 - * Who will pay for the care and upkeep of the animal, including feeding, health care and cleaning?
 - * How will the animal be cared for on weekends and during service closure periods?
 - * What physical space is available in the service? Is it adequate for the animal you are thinking of?
 - * Are all educators and families happy with the decision to keep an animal at the service?
 - * What time will be available throughout the day to care for the animal?
 - * Are there any children or educators at your service who are allergic to, or have phobias of, animals?
 - * What changes to your service's policies and procedures need to be considered?
 - * What are the health and safety risks?
- ◁ Educators will ensure that all pets and their enclosures are kept clean and hygienic. Educators must ensure they have clean bedding and water. Food is available for the pet, but kept out of reach of children at all times.
- ◁ Children must be supervised at all times when interacting with pets or animals. Educators will manage any health or safety risk for the children that may be caused by animals, such as asthma and allergies.
- ◁ Pets will not have access to children's bedding, toys, food preparation areas, eating surfaces or utensils.

◁ Animals and birds visiting the education and care service as part of the educational program are the responsibility of the owner(s). The educators will ensure that the environment remains safe and hygienic at all times during the visit. Educators will complete risk assessment paperwork in relation to the visit.

Animals and Birds Other than Pets or Invited Visitors

◁ There are situations that may spontaneously occur, involving animals. For example, there may be a situation where an animal or bird has made its way into the education and care service. Educators may use this as a spontaneous learning experience for the children. At all times they will ensure 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. Each state and territory has a local government department of environment or contact Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service Inc on 13 000 WIRES - 13 00 094 737.

◁ 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.

Pests and Vermin

◁ Pest control will occur at the education and care service on a biannual basis. Educators will monitor any occurrences in the service to determine the success of control measures.

◁ If pests and vermin are seen, educators will advise the nominated supervisor. The approved provider is responsible for arranging additional pest control visits.

◁ Where appropriate, educators discuss with children safety issues relating to dangerous products, plants, vermin and objects.

◁ Educators will thoroughly clean all areas that animals or pests have accessed in the education and care service with hot, soapy water/disinfectant. If the remains of an animal or animal faeces have been found, the remains will be disposed of according to the local Council guidelines and the area where the remains were found will be thoroughly disinfected with hot, soapy water.

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

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Nominated Supervisor will:

◁ Obtain permission for children to access visiting animals upon enrolment at our preschool as part of our enrolment procedure. Any allergies or fears to be noted on enrolment form.

◁ Ensure that animals, including family pets do not enter the centre's environment unless for educational purposes and if so they must be appropriately contained (held firmly, caged or muzzled etc) to ensure the children's safety.

Educators will:

◁ Ensure supervised contact by children with all animals.

◁ Monitor and supervise any contact with pets that visit our preschool.

◁ Ensure all animals are kept away from food preparation areas.

◁ Ensure there is no contact with animals when the children are eating.

◁ Ensure all animals and pets visiting our preschool are in a clean and healthy condition. Visiting pet owners will be advised that their pets need to be vaccinated, de-wormed and free of fleas or other pests or infections prior to visiting our centre.

◁ Ensure that contact with potentially dangerous animals is closely supervised, e.g. visiting animals should be able to be viewed but close contact should be well supervised.

◁ Ensure the children wash their hands immediately after contact with all animals.

◁ Ensure all unsupervised animals are kept contained preventing contact between children and unsupervised animals.

◁ Ensure all animals faeces and other wastes from pets and visiting animals are regularly removed and appropriately disposed of. Ensure children's grassed play areas are disinfected after animals have been exposed to the area.

◁ Be aware that birds, poultry, reptiles, spiders and fish are potential sources of infectious diseases. For educational purposes birds & poultry, such as hatching chickens, should only be kept in enclosed cages. Strict supervision and hygiene practices – handwashing before and after handling - will be adhered to when in contact with any birds, poultry and reptiles.

Evaluation:

The presence of animals in the education and care service will be managed by educators to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children, families, educators and animals is maintained at all times. Educators will consider the risks versus the benefits of including animals in the educational program.

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.

Legislative Requirements:

- ◁ Education and Care Services National Regulations: 103, 113
- ◁ The Model Work Health and Safety Laws and Regulations

Links to National Quality Standard:

- ◁ National Quality Standards/Elements: 2.1.2, 2.2.2, 3.2

Sources:

- ◁ Kidsafe NSW Inc – www.kidsafensw.org
- ◁ NSW Department of Health – www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/petting-zoos-and-personal-hygiene.aspx
- ◁ ACECQA's Guide to the National Quality Framework www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide
- ◁ Staying Healthy 5th Edition www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/clinical%20guidelines/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf
- ◁ ACECQA - Keeping Pets and Animals in Education and Care Services www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-07/QA3_InfoSheetKeepingPetsAndAnimalsInEducationAndCareServices.pdf

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