

Policy Statement

This policy acts to ensure that:

- The opportunity for children to engage with animals offers enjoyment and stimulation
- Educators will role model appropriate behaviours with animals, and guidance in caring for the needs of animals to children
- The service supports children to understand and appreciate the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land

Goals

- Provide a clean, safe and humane environment for all animals and birds that visit the service
- Ensure that the health and wellbeing of children is being maintained when engaging with animals
- Ensure pest control measures are regularly taken
- Ensure there are procedures in place for removing unwanted animals, pests and vermin from the premises

Strategies

Invited Visitors

Prior to a visit by animals, the service will:

- Consult families
- Complete a Risk Assessment
- Ensure children are supervised at all times when interacting with animals
- Ensure Educators manage any health and safety risk for the children that may be caused by the animals such as asthma or allergies
- Animals and birds visiting the service as part of the educational program are the responsibility of the owner
- Educators will ensure that the environment remains safe and hygienic at all times during animals visiting the service
- Educate children about “safe behaviour” with animals
- Designate a specific area for the animals
- Ensure animals are kept in enclosures or under appropriate restraints

Policy Created
February 2016

Policy Last Updated
October 2022

Policy Review Date
October 2024

Animals and Birds Other than Invited Visitors

- There are situations that may spontaneously occur, involving animals. For example an animal or bird may make its way into the service. Educators may use this as a spontaneous learning experience, and ensure that at all times the safety and wellbeing of the children is met
- If an animal or bird is potentially dangerous, such as a snake or spider Educators will contact the appropriate authority for assistance – this information for each service is located in their Regulation 97.2 Risk Assessment
- The animals' movements should be monitored to ensure a speedy and efficient capture by a professional, but the priority is the safety of Educators, children and families

Pests & Vermin

- Pest control is the responsibility of the school or landlord, and any occurrences within the service will be reported
- If any pest or vermin are seen Educators will notify the Nominated Supervisor
- Where appropriate, Educators will discuss with children safety issues in relation to dangerous products, plants, vermin and objects
- Educators will thoroughly clean any areas that animals or pests have accessed in the service with hot soapy water
- Educators are responsible for assessing any situation in the service where animals are involved to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children, families and animals

Family Day Care

Pets are a valued part of many families, and access to pets in an Educator's home can provide the children in care with many positive learning experiences

- Develop a Risk Management Plan for their own pets and regularly update this in their Operational Diary
- Ensure daily cleaning occurs before children arrive in care if educators' pets are kept indoors
- Any bedding, toys, food and water containers and litter trays are to be inaccessible to children
- All play areas are to be kept free of animal droppings, bones and holes dug by animals

Pets in Family Day Care Homes

Cats

- Cats should not be caged
- Maintaining a high level of hygiene with cats is imperative if they are out and about
- Educators should be mindful of their cat's temperament so that no harm comes to the children in their care
- Even if your cat is very affectionate and loves handling, a poke or prod from a small child may irritate him to the point of scratching or biting
- Make sure the children understand that they must treat all animals kindly and handle them gently
- Cats should be deterred from being in the children's play areas

Dogs

- Children under the age of five are most at risk of dog bite injuries
- Incidents are commonly triggered by a child's interaction with the dog such as playing or approaching the dog while it is sleeping or eating
- Children need to be shown how to interact appropriately with dogs; they need positive messages and role models
- Model the desired behaviour with the child, tell them what you are doing and why you are doing it. Don't assume that once the behaviour has been demonstrated, the child will remember, the child may need many demonstrations and lots of modeling before they are fully able to demonstrate the desired behaviour

Walking Dogs with the Children

- If Educators wish to take their dogs out for a walk when they are walking the children either to or from school, or on another outing approval needs to be sought from CCEL first to ensure that the children's safety is maintained
- The Educator and CCEL will do an assessment of the dog's temperament, and its experience with interacting with young children
- The Educator and CCEL will do an assessment on the age of children in care and their experience with pets

Horses

- Children are not to ride horses unless the Educator has written approval in the first instance from the service, and then from the child's parents
- Children are not to ride horses unless the Educator has the required additional insurance

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider /Nominated Supervisor

- Support Coordinators and Educators with training and resources on health and safety practices for animals

Educators

- Inform families of their procedures relating to animals and children in care
- Children who have a fear of animals should be treated with special care, ensuring a slow and gentle introduction
- Ensure that only small groups of children are engaging with the animals at any given time
- Ensure children and Educators wash their hands immediately after handling animal
- Ensure direct supervision is always in place, and no child can access the animals without an Educator
- Instruct children on how to handle and protect the animals, encouraging the use of quiet voices

Families

- Inform the service if their child has any allergies to animals
- Inform the service if their child has any fears around specific animals

LINKS TO:

- **Education & Care Services National Law**
Section 167
- **Education & Care Services National Regulations**
103, 168
- **National Quality Standards/Elements**
.1.2, 2.2.2, 3.2
- **Child Safe Standards**
1, 3, 8, 9, 10

Continual Monitoring and Improvement

Continual improvement and monitoring will occur in the following ways:

- Incidental and planned consultation with families
- Approved Provider and Coordinators accessing current relevant information
- Approved Provider, Coordinators and Educators accessing current and relevant training
- Internal evaluation of incidences and the improvement of systems

SOURCES

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#) - December 2021
- [Education and care Services National Law](#) - January 2022
- [Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations](#) - October 2017
- [Guide to the National Quality Standard](#) - January 2020
- [Implementing the Child Safe Standards: A Guide for Early Education and Outside School Hours Care Services](#), NSW Department of Education, 2021
- [A Guide to the Child Safe Standards](#), NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, 2020
- [ACECQA – FDC Approved Provider compliance responsibilities](#) – October 2017
- [Be You](#)
- My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia
- ECA Code of Ethics
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Kidsafe NSW Inc – www.kidsafensw.org
- NSW Department of Health – www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/petting-zoos-and-personal-hygiene.aspx
- Staying Healthy in Childcare 5th Edition
- ACECQA – Keeping Pets and Animals in Education and Care Services Factsheet

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES:

- Child Protection
- Child-Safe Environment
- Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness
- Interactions with Children
- Emergency & Evacuation
- Supervision