

# Animals in the Environment Policy



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<b>Warning - Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.</b>			
DCC Network/All Organisation Information/DCC Policies/Quality Area 2 – Childrens Health & Safety			

## 1. Policy Statement

River Region Early Education will respect the environment and all animals, we will educate children about the proper care and treatment of animals and provide a safe and hygienic environment that minimises the risk of injuries from the animal.

## 2. Rationale

This policy guides the centre to help support the Children to become socially responsible and show respect for the environment It is vital that we have responsible ownership of pets, animals or birds that may reside at the centre. Role modelling of appropriate behaviours with animals and providing 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.

## 3. Definitions

Nil

## 4. Procedure

### a) Pets and invited animals

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- complete a written risk assessment before allowing any animal to be kept at the service, or pet to visit the service, and take appropriate actions to reduce the risk of harm the animal may pose to children and adults (which may include a decision not to proceed). Records of the assessment and resulting actions will be maintained at the service.
- consult families,
- 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?

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- What changes to your service's policies and procedures need to be considered? For example, your hand washing policy will need to be updated to include washing hands after having contact with the animal.
- What are the health and safety risks?

Incorporation of *animals in the environment* will be incorporated into the program.

- Educators will manage any health or safety risk for the children that may be caused by animals, such as asthma and allergies.
- Children must be closely supervised when accessing any animal or pet at the service.
- Any animal or pet kept at the Service will be regularly fed, cleaned, vaccinated, have flea powder applied to them and be regularly checked for fleas and wormed. Any animal in a cage will have its cage cleaned daily. The local vet will be sought for advice if required.
- Educators will teach children how to properly care for animals and how to treat them appropriately.
- Room tasks will include feeding, cleaning and caring for the animal, and children will take turns completing these activities. The roster will be supervised by educators to ensure caring for and feeding the animal is not overlooked.
- The Nominated Supervisor and educators will implement a staff roster to ensure any animal that requires care or feeding over the weekend or outside service operating hours is either taken to a staff member's home or provided with care and food at the service during these periods.
- Pets will not have access to children's bedding, toys, food preparation areas, eating surfaces or utensils.
- Anyone who has handled the animal or pet will immediately wash their hands after they have finished handling the animal or pet.
- 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.
- Educator and children's animals or pets will only be allowed in the Service when permission has been granted by the Nominated Supervisor. If an animal is brought to the Service when families are collecting children it must be left at the gate far enough way so children cannot touch the animal through the fence.

### **b) 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.
- 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.

**c) Pests and vermin**

- Pest control will occur at the education and care service on an annual 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. If the remains of animal or animal faeces have been found, the remains will be disposed of 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 well-being of children, families and animals.

**5. Sources**

- Kidsafe NSW Inc – [www.kidsafensw.org.au](http://www.kidsafensw.org.au)
- NSW Department of Health - [www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/general/pettingzoo\\_fs.html](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/general/pettingzoo_fs.html)
- Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care – 5thEd.
- Community Childcare
- Centre support

**6. Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Standards**

Legislation	
Education and Care Services National Regulation	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
National Quality Standards	
2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.2.3	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.
Child Safe Standards	
Early Years Learning Framework Learning Outcomes	
2	Children are connected with and contribute to their world
Early Years Learning Framework Principles	

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	Secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships
	Sustainability
<b>Early Years Learning Framework Practices</b>	
	Responsiveness to children
	Play-based learning and intentionality
	Learning environments

## 7. Related Documents

Doc #	Attachments

Doc #	Intersections with other key documents

## 8. Document Control

Doc #	Doc Title	Version	Approved	Next Review
NQS2.40	Animals in the Environment Policy	2	Oct 2018	Oct 2020
NQS2.40	Animals in the Environment Policy	3	June 2022	June 2025
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