

POLICY/PROCEDURE NAME & REVIEW PROCESS	PETS at the SERVICE POLICY This policy and procedure has been created to provide all stakeholders with clear guidelines and transparency to our practices and procedures. We welcome feedback and input from all stakeholders at any time and this policy is subject to review based on feedback or due date of annual review.
NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD	QUALITY AREA 3 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT 3.2 USE 3.2.3 Environmentally responsible.
NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS	170-Policies and procedures to be followed 171-Policies and procedures to be kept available 172- Notification of change to policies or procedures
RELATED POLICIES and RECORDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incident review and reflection record Risk assessment
SCOPE OF POLICY	This policy applies to all children, educators, families, management, students, volunteers, and visitors at our service.
AIM OF POLICY	To ensure that our service has strong guidelines, procedures, and practices in place regarding pets at the service for all children who attend our service in order to support their safety, wellbeing, and protection. Our aim is to provide a clear policy, implement the policy, support practices relating to the policy, train staff regarding the policy and maintain and update the compliance of the policy for all our stakeholders.
SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION	Implementation Research has shown that childrens development is improved immensely if they constantly interact with animals. Improvements can be seen such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self Esteem -children who care for animals are more likely to have high self-esteem which in turn improves a range of outcomes throughout their lives. There is evidence to show that children with emotional, social, learning or behaviour disorders can benefit enormously from the presence of and interaction with a companion animal. Typically, children who are withdrawn become more confident in the presence of animals and participate more fully in group settings. Those who are hyperactive often become quiet, absorbed and more focused. Social and Emotional Skills – Interacting with animals helps children to work on their social skills with no pressure. In addition, spending time with animals can help children to develop a strong sense of empathy. Of course, understanding others’ feelings is a vital skill to learn, which in turn extends to their human relationships. Learn Responsibility- Animals don’t care for themselves, and children are more capable than we give them credit for. Children can learn the responsibility of caring for an animal who relies on them to be fed, given water and cleaned on a regular basis. Responsibility is a valuable skill for life. While interactions with animals are extremely beneficial, it’s important to teach children safety and healthy practices. Pets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to having a pet at the service, we have involved the families, children, and educators in the process. We have considered the practicality and the responsibility. We will choose a pet that is low maintenance, allergy free. We will ensure that all our stakeholders are comfortable with the introduction of pets in the service. Nominated supervisor will ensure that we have considered animal welfare and ethics policies, legislation, and standards and local, state or territory government licensing requirements (for example, for the keeping of reptiles or freshwater turtles, or limits on the number of chickens) Nominated supervisor will conduct and complete a risk assessment record prior to receiving the pet. Nominated supervisor will ensure that all consideration has eventuated regarding developing practices to support a safe environment and minimise risk, the welfare of animals in a service. Nominated supervisor has sought information from stakeholders regarding any known potential allergies or illnesses that children may suffer as a result of coming into contact with animals. Interaction with pets

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Service Support Within Reach	Warning -uncontrolled when printed. This document is current at the time of printing and may be subject to change without notice				

- Educators will ensure children wash their hands before and after playing with or feeding animals.
- Educators will actively supervise all interactions with service pets.
- Educators will monitor behaviour, while most children are instinctively gentle with animals, curiosity can sometimes get the better of them. Explain that pulling ears, tails and paws can hurt the animal.
- Educators will discourage children from playing with animals while eating.
- Children should not put their faces close to animals.
- Make sure that children wash and dry their hands after touching animals.
- Ensure that animals are treated, wormed, and immunised as recommended by a vet.
- Animals that are ill should be treated promptly by a vet.
- Ensure that animals are not brought to sandpits, pot plants and vegetable gardens or children's bedding.
- Always wear gloves when handling animal faeces, emptying litter trays and cleaning cages.
- Dispose of animal faeces and litter daily and more often if necessary. Place faeces and litter in a plastic bag and put it out with the garbage.
- Educators will teach children not to approach strange animals without asking for their owners' permission first.
- Be sure to highlight the difference between wild and domestic animals and stress that wild animals should be observed quietly, from a safe distance.
- Ensure the animal's enclosures, tanks whichever is applicable, is cleaned on a regular basis and ensure that food and water is supplied to them on a daily basis or more often depending on the needs and number of pets.
- Educators will ensure that children do not assist in the cleaning of bird cages, fish tanks or other animal cages or pens.
- Nominated supervisor will implement a weekend roster to ensure that the service pet is cared for on the weekends and public holidays.
- Nominated supervisor will ensure that pet food will be stored away from child/rens reach and when feeding pet active close supervision is carried out by educators.
- Nominated supervisor will ensure that we have the correct licences (if applicable) for our pet.

Pets visiting the service

Having animals visit the service is an extremely exciting time for all children and educators.

However, it is imperative that we adhere to safe practice guidelines when dealing with animals.

Diseases can be spread through direct contact with animals and then placing contaminated fingers or other items in the mouth.

Diseases can also be spread through animal bites and scratches, contact with their carcasses, or through indirect contact with their faeces, urine, saliva, blood, aerosols, birth products, or enclosures contaminated with these materials. Diseases can also be spread through contaminated dust.

We will be guided firstly by the owners of the visiting animals.

Nominated supervisor and educators will:

- Educate children prior to the attendance of the animals as to safe practice and guidelines.
- Revisit this on the morning of the visit or just prior to the actual visit.
- Supervise children at all times when dealing with visiting animals – in some cases we may invite families to attend to assist with this process.
- Conduct a risk assessment prior to attendance of the animals.
- Position, when possible, animal enclosures close to hand washing facilities so that once a child has handled an animal it is the next step to wash hands.

In the event of an injury

- Keep child calm.
- Immediately conduct First aid.
- Call an ambulance if severe.
- Inform parent/ guardian as soon as is practical once child has been attended to.
- Inform regulatory authority depending on the severity of the injury/ if child attended hospital / doctor/ ambulance attended.

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- Conduct an ***Incident review and reflection record*** on how to avoid further instances of this occurring again.

Each member of the team plays an important role in the implementation of each policies guidelines, and they are outlined as below but not limited to the following:

The Approved Provider

- Will ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- Will ensure they take reasonable steps to ensure that the nominated supervisor, educators, staff, and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.
- Will ensure they provide the nominated supervisor, educators, staff and volunteers the documentation to perform their role, follow policy, procedure, and document according to regulatory and service requirements.
- Will ensure that adequate induction process is provided to all staff to ensure they have time to read and understand policies and procedures and seek further information if unsure.
- Will ensure that the nominated supervisor and staff are equipped with ongoing professional development and training they require to comply with this policy
- Will encourage feedback from stakeholders regarding the policy's effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns.
- Will ensure the policy is kept up to date with current legislation, research, and best practice.

The Nominated Supervisor

- Will adhere to and implement the obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations.
- Will ensure they take reasonable steps to ensure that the educators, staff, and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.
- Will ensure they provide the educators, staff and volunteers the documentation to perform their role, follow policy and procedure and ensure they are checking the documentation according to regulatory and service requirements.
- Will ensure that a rigorous recruitment process is completed, and a thorough induction process is provided to all staff to ensure they have time to read and understand policies and procedures and seek further information if unsure.
- Will ensure that the staff are supported with ongoing professional development and training they require to comply with this policy.
- Will encourage feedback from stakeholders and staff regarding the policy's effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns.
- Will ensure the policy is kept up to date with current legislation, research, and best practice.
- Will conduct regular staff meetings to address policy compliance with legislation, policy implementation, changes to policy and or collect feedback for annual review of policy.

Educators

- Will adhere to and implement the obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations.
- Will ensure they take reasonable steps to follow the service policy and procedures and seek advice or further support if unsure.
- Will ensure they complete and document any related records regarding the implementation of this policy and practice requirements of the service.
- Will attend any ongoing professional development, staff meetings and training they require to comply with this policy and practice requirements of the service.
- Will provide feedback to the nominated supervisor or approved provider regarding the policy's effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns.
- Will provide feedback regarding policy review when required.

Families

- Will advise nominated supervisor if their child/ren have any allergies which may be exacerbated by pets at the service.

REGULATION IMPLEMENTATION

The following procedures outline and support all stakeholders to understand and implement the regulatory guidelines of this policy.

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In regard to regulation 170- Policies and procedures to be followed.	Approved Provider will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all staff and volunteers are made aware of regulatory policies and procedures by ensuring that this forms a part of the induction process. Ensure probationary reviews will be conducted once new staff are appointed at the 3- month and 6-month mark to ensure that they are following policy and procedure and to review and revise regulatory policies. Ensure staff meetings will be conducted on a regular basis to allow for review of policy and procedure and further training and revision of procedural practices in relation to policy and procedure. Ensure annual review and revision of policies and procedures will be conducted, and all educators will be given the opportunity for input.
In regard to Regulation 171- Policies and procedures to be kept available.	Approved Provider will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that policies and procedures are available to all staff and the location and availability will form a part of the induction process. Ensure policies will be available on request for all staff members to have access when required. Ensure policies will be available when required for staff members to download copies and/or print out if required in order to complete assignments or to form part of their research and/ or update their knowledge. Ensure policies will be available for all stakeholders when requested and when updating.
In regard to Regulation 172- Notification of change to policies or procedures	Approved Provider will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure staff meetings will be conducted on a regular basis to allow for review of policy and procedure, provide further training and allow for input if required in relation to policy and procedure. Ensure stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback for policies and procedures at any time, not just on annual review but will also be invited to add feedback at review time or after an event that may require change to policy or procedure. Ensure policies and procedures will be emailed or put on display in the foyer for stakeholders to have the ability to provide feedback. Ensure feedback will be considered from stakeholders and educators and may result in a change in policy. Ensure policy and procedure may be changed at any time if there has been an incident in the service that has required a change to be implemented for the safety and health of children and or educators. Ensure in the event of a change to a policy after feedback or a situation that occurs, we will provide 14 days' notice to all stakeholders before the change takes effect.
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	<p>We are dedicated to the ongoing improvement of our practices and procedures through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting regular reviews and updates of this policy with all stakeholders. Actively seeking feedback from children, families, and staff members. Providing targeted skill development and training for staff when areas for improvement are identified or when gaps in policy and procedure implementation are observed.
KEY TERMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder - a person or group of people who have an interest in a business, a person such as an employee or customer. They have a sense of responsibility toward it and an interest in its success
WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING SOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. ACECQA Code of Ethics Education and Care Services National Regulations. Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Guide to the National Quality Framework. National Quality Standard. NHMRC- 6th Edition Staying Healthy United Convention on the Rights of the Child Petting zoos and personal hygiene fact sheet - Fact sheets (nsw.gov.au)

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