

Animal Care & Welfare and Pet



Policy

Having a relationship with a pet can help children develop a caring attitude and skills such as nurturing, responsibility, empathy and improved communication. Having a pet in an early childhood environment and school enables children who are not otherwise exposed to animals to learn these skills. The pet will become part of the daily educational program and lead to activities and learning about other animals.

Animals and pets provide the children with experience in the development of a life cycle within the classroom environment. They also provide the children with opportunities to have responsibility for something that relies on their care for survival and to develop discipline in their movements and handling of animals for the safety and health of both animal and child.

All animals in NSW are protected by the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 (NSW). In addition, animals used in teaching or research of any kind in NSW, are protected by special legislation, the Animal Research Act 1985 (NSW) and the Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

Because the most common use of animals in schools is for teaching and demonstration rather than research, schools have been recognised as a special case under the Animal Research Act 1985 (NSW). This means that teaching activities that use animals have been classified into categories depending on the level of impact that the activity has on the animal.

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW

168	Policies and procedures are required in relation to health and safety
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PURPOSE

Our service aims to provide a safe, hygienic and humane environment for all animals and pets that visit or reside at both campuses, which will educate children in the proper care of animals.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the campuses.

IMPLEMENTATION

Pets help children from a young age to learn to care for other living things. They can teach a sense of responsibility, caring and tolerance. They can offer many opportunities for developing observational skills and basic natural science experiences. If the educators wish to have a pet in the service or school, they must make all the decisions in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and families.

Educators are encouraged to foster children's ability to understand and respect the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land. Responsible ownership of pets, animals or birds that may reside at the Farmhouse Montessori Schools or visit the premises is vital. Role models of appropriate behaviour with animals and guidance in caring for the needs of animals are beneficial for children.

Service & School

Procedure

1. The main containers of food for pets are to be kept in the shed or storage areas.
 2. Smaller containers with enough food for a period of time will be provided near the animal for the children to use to enable them to feed the animal when they wish.
 3. All containers are to be checked daily for cleanliness and to ensure sufficient food for the animal.
 4. The nominated animal officer will ensure the animal's enclosure is checked daily and cleaned at least weekly or as deemed necessary through the week.
- Wherever and whenever animals are encountered in school activities, teachers are responsible for assisting students to develop a respect for animals and to understand the ethical issues involved in their interaction with the animals.

Treatment of animal

All staff must ensure that any animal is treated with respect and care in the way it is handled and in the home provided for it.

As part of the educational program, children are given information regarding the best care and environment for the animal at the School and background information on the natural environment of the animal, biological classification and other information to assist the child in the observation and appreciation of the animal.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements

- Arrangements are made by nominated carer for the daily inspection of the animals at the school and for the responsible person to be able to access veterinary care at short notice. This monitoring includes weekends and school holidays. The person responsible must be provided with the name, address and phone number of the school veterinary plus contact numbers for the principal should medical attention be required.
- Schools must maintain comprehensive records documenting acquisition, disposal and all husbandry activities carried out with the animals kept by the school for educational purposes. *See Form A1*
- If schools keep animals, their evacuation and emergency plans must include information and procedures to ensure the welfare of animals is safeguarded in the event of flood, fire, drought, storm damage and vandalism. *See Emergency Evacuation Procedure.*
- Schools are required to report incidents of animal cruelty. Reporting procedures must include the submission of a Serious Incident Report and the notification of the incident to the Schools Animal Welfare Officer. Appropriate veterinary care must be sought for any injured animals. *See Form A2*
- Management, Educators, children and families should consider the rationale for having a pet and long-term implications of such a decision prior to getting the pet.
- All pets and their enclosures are to be kept clean and hygienic with appropriate bedding and water.
- Food will be made available for all pets and animals, but kept out of reach of children at all times.
- Any animal or pet kept at the service will be regularly fed, cleaned, vaccinated, and regularly checked for fleas and wormed.
- Animals including pets will not be allowed in the sand pit or any other play area. In event that this happens, educators will refer to the Sand Pit Policy
- Animals including pets will never be taken into the food preparation area nor will they be allowed near the eating or sleeping area.
- Anyone who has handled the animal or pet will immediately wash their hands after they have finished handling the animal or pet.
- Children's animal or pets will only be allowed in the service when the Nominated Supervisor has granted permission.
- We will include in the program how to properly care for animals and how to treat them appropriately.

- Pets will not have access to children's bedding, toys, food preparation areas, earing surfaces and utensils

Animal Visit

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 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. In NSW this authority is the National Parks and Wildlife Service - 1300 361 967 (8.30am - 5.00pm) or NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service Inc. on 13 000 WIRES - 13 00 094 737.

A professional should monitor the animal's movements to ensure a speedy and efficient capture, 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 & Vermin

- Pest control will occur at the Education and Care Service on an annual basis as a minimum.
- 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 will discuss with the 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 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.
- Educators are responsible for assessing any situation in the Education and Care Service and school where animals are involved to ensure the health, safety and well-being of children, families and animals.

Animal cruelty

If incidents of animal cruelty occur, the procedures described in the documents, *Animals in schools: Animal welfare guidelines for teachers and Guidelines for Schools and TAFE NSW Colleges and Campuses: Management of Serious Incidents*, must be followed.

If an incident compromising the welfare of any animal occurs, either at the school or during a school activity, then specific actions must be taken. These actions include;

- immediate attention to the needs of the animal(s)
- use of student discipline and/or welfare procedures
- implementation of Serious Incidents procedures as described in *Guidelines for Schools and TAFE NSW colleges and Campuses: Management of Serious Incidents*.

Legislation

In addition in NSW, there are a variety of acts and regulations that relate to animals. They include:

- Companion Animals Act 1998 provides for the management of cats and dogs, including their identification and registration. It sets out the duties and responsibilities of their owners and procedures for registering animals and for dealing with seized animals.
- Meat Industry Act 1978 regulates the meat industry in NSW and controls the slaughter of stock for human consumption. Slaughtering of stock on unlicensed premises for human consumption is illegal, other than on farms for consumption by the family.

- National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Act 2001 prohibits the taking or holding of most native fauna except under licence. If teachers wish to use native fauna in teaching activities, a licence must be obtained from the National Parks and Wildlife Service prior to the commencement of the activity. Exceptions that relate to teaching are the collection of tadpoles for observation (see Species information: Frogs and toads (pdf 72kb) for conditions and more information about this activity) and the keeping of any of 42 species of native birds, purchased from a licensed supplier (see Species information: Australian native animals (pdf 284kb)).
- Pesticides Act 1999 controls the use of pesticides in NSW and allows a pesticide to be used only according to the directions on the label.
- Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 regulates, controls and prohibits the supply and use of poisons, restricted substances, drugs of addiction and other dangerous drugs. There are restrictions on the labelling, access to and supply of many of these drugs.
- Rural Lands Protection Act 1998 relates to travelling stock and the control of noxious and feral animals and the keeping of rabbits.
- Stock (Chemical Residues) Act 1975 controls the slaughter for human consumption of stock where there is a risk of the animals being contaminated by certain chemicals. It relates particularly to pesticides and other residues and places controls over the movement of stock from herds or flocks where residues above the legal limit have been detected.
- Stock Diseases Act 1923 regulates the control of stock diseases in NSW, with restrictions on the movement of diseased stock and requirements to notify certain diseases in some areas, e.g. foot rot in protected areas. It gives certain powers to inspectors to enter premises where disease is suspected and allows action to be taken with diseased stock. This Act gives power to quarantine for certain diseases, e.g. foot rot, bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis.
- Stock Medicines Amendment Act 2004 controls the registration, use and possession of stock medicines. Some medicines are readily available on the open market, e.g. Anthelmintic. Others are restricted substances and can be prescribed or supplied only by a veterinarian, e.g. antibiotics. Others can be used only by a veterinarian or under the direct supervision of a veterinarian, e.g. anesthetics.
- Veterinary Practice Act 2003 lists those procedures nominated as Acts of Veterinary Science, which can be performed only by registered veterinary surgeons. Such procedures would be permitted in a school only where a registered veterinary surgeon is on the staff or employed to perform the procedure.

Source

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- ECA Code of Ethics.
- Guide to the National Quality Standard.
- Kidsafe NSW Inc. – www.kidsafensw.org.au
- NSW Department of Health - www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/general/pettingzoo_fs.html
- Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011)
- Health and Safety in Children's Services Model Policies and Practices – 2nd Ed. revised (2003) www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/_assets/main/documents/childcare_model_policies.pdf
- Kidsafe NSW Inc. – www.kidsafensw.org.au
- Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care – 5th Edition.

Policy Review Date
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