

PET AND ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY

Best Practice – Quality Area 3

PURPOSE

Having a pet at your service gives children the opportunity to observe, interact and learn about animals. It can be a valuable part of a child's education and care experience, enriching their learning about nature, ecology, and relationships.

While there are many benefits to keeping animals in a service, there are also a range of issues that educators need to consider for the safety and well-being of both the children and the animals.

The purpose of this policy is to promote respect for the environment and all animals, to educate children about the proper care and treatment of animals, and to provide a safe and hygienic environment that minimises the risk of injuries for the animal.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Wilson Street Kindergarten is committed to:

- Providing children access to animals in the education and care setting
- Developing practices to support a safe environment and minimise risk for both the children and animals
- The welfare of animals at the service
- Acknowledging the value of children's learning to care for animals safely and humanely

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, person in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, parents/guardians and visitors attending the programs and activities of Wilson Street Kindergarten

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

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.

Observing, interacting with and learning to care for an animal can be a valuable part of a child's education and care experience, enriching their learning. Encouraging direct contact and developing bonds with animals, can help children build empathy. Providing children with access to animals in an education and care service can help them learn about the life cycle and relationships and improve communication.

PROCEDURES

The nominated supervisor and other staff are responsible for:

- Conducting a risk assessment prior to allowing any pets to be kept at the service or visit the service
- Taking appropriate action to reduce the risk of harm the animal may pose to children and adults
- Informing families and determine if any allergies exist
- Supervising children at all times when accessing any animal or pet at the service to avoid potential injury or harm to the child or animal and ensuring that the child and their feelings are respected e.g a child may be frightened and not want to handle or be near the pet

- Ensuring any animal or pet kept as the service will be regularly fed, cleaned, vaccinated, have flea treatment and be regularly checked for fleas and be wormed at the cost of the centre
- Ensure that any cage will be adequate for the size of the animal and be cleaned and inspected regularly
- Teaching the children how to properly care for animals and how to treat them appropriately
- Educators will support the children during interactions with animals and handling of them if required
- Supervising and support the children when they are involved in the feeding and cleaning of the animal and its environment
- Considering the animals needs and feeding requirements over weekends and holiday periods and ensuring that alternative arrangements are made when required
- Ensure that Animals or pets will not taken into the food preparation area nor will they be allowed near the children while they are eating
- Ensuring that animals or pets should not be taken into the sandpit or any other play area
- Ensuring that anyone who has handled an animal immediately washes their hands after they have finished handling the animal or pet
- Ensuring emergency procedures are followed in the event of an allergic reaction or medical emergency. Notify parent of signs, symptoms/reaction and emergency procedures following and call 000 if necessary.

Parents and guardians are responsible for:

- Informing staff of any allergies in relation to the services pets
- Ensuring that when animals are brought into the service they are left at the gate far enough away so children cannot touch the animal through the fence in case of allergies, fears or potetial danger to either the animal or child

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues arising from this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

AUTHORISATION

The policy was adopted by the approved provider of Wilson Street Kindergarten on 13th Oct 21

REVIEW DATE: TERM 2, 2024