

14 – ANIMALS AND PETS

Effective from: 19 November 2015
Contact officer: Coordinator of Children's Services
Next review date: 18 months – 2 years
File Reference: 1825/29.5
Related Policies/Local Laws/Legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 CI 103, 168
- National Quality Standard: QA 2.1.4, 2.3.2, 3.2
- The NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011 & the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011

Related Documents:

- ACECQA (2011) *Guide to National Standards*.
- ACECQA (2011) *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulation*.
- Kidsafe NSW Inc – www.kidsafensw.org.au
- Australian Government. National Health and medical research Council. *“Staying Healthy- Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.”* 5th Edition 2012
- Community Child Care Cooperative – Sample Policy – Animals in the environment – accessed May 2015 from www.ccccnsw.org.au

PURPOSE

Educators are “encouraged to foster children’s capacity to understand and respect the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land.” (NQS element 3.2)

Responsible ownership of pets, animals or birds that may reside at the Education and Care Service or visit the premises is vital. Role models of appropriate behaviours with animals and guidance in caring for the needs of animals is beneficial for children. This operational procedures also considers the management of unwanted visitor such as pests and vermin.



Wingecarribee Children's Services is committed to:

- Providing a safe, clean and humane environment for all animals and birds that visit or reside at the Service;
- Ensuring that pets, animals and vermin do not pose a health or safety risk to children in care.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

Wingecarribee Children's Services Staff employed by Wingecarribee Shire Council

Wingecarribee Family Day Care Educators as Agents of the Approved Provider –
Wingecarribee Shire Council

All children and families accessing care with Council's Children's Services

All volunteers and students engaged with Wingecarribee Children's Services.

DEFINITIONS

NIL

PROCEDURE

1. General - All Service Types

- 1.1 Educators/staff will ensure that all pets and their enclosures are kept clean and hygienic. Educators must ensure they have clean bedding and water. Food is available for the pet, but kept out of reach of the child at all times.
- 1.2 Children must be directly supervised at all times when interacting with pets or animals. Educators and staff will manage any health or safety risks for the children that may be caused by animals, such as asthma and allergies.
- 1.3 Pets will not have access to children's bedding, toys, food preparation areas, eating surfaces or utensils
- 1.4 Animals and birds visiting the Education and Care Service as a part of the educational program are the responsibility of the owner(s). The educators/staff will ensure that the environment remains safe and hygienic at all times during the visit. Where appropriate Educators/staff will complete a written risk assessment prior to the visit.
- 1.5 Staff/Educators are 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, educators/staff and animals. Taking into consideration the following:

- the number of children;
- the ages of children and their level of skills and abilities;
- children's prior level of experience of being with animals, and knowledge of 'safe behaviour' around pets;
- the type of animal;
- the animal's level of familiarity with children;
- the animals general temperament in regard to any likelihood of becoming frightened, upset, over stimulated or aggressive in response to the 'bustle' of an Education and Care Setting.

1.6 Authority to engage and participate in appropriate, safe and directly supervised activities in a "controlled environment" will be sort by families on enrolment and thereafter annually for all children enrolled in Wingecarrabee Children's Services.

Family Day Care Specific

1.7 Educators are responsible for:

- informing families at the enrolment interview of pets and animals on their premises and prior to obtaining a new pet,
- Ensuring any animal that enters or is kept at the premises is in clean and healthy condition, wormed and immunised as recommended by a vet.
- Where appropriate have domestic pet or companion animal registered with the relevant authority.
- Completing annually the "Educator undertaking regarding contact between children & animals". (Form OS&H16)
- Covering any sandpit at the conclusion of each day to prevent access by animals.
- Restraining any animal that travels in a vehicle with a child in care (e.g., by a fixed barrier or harness or in a cage) (CI71.6)
- Being aware of this procedure when on outings away from their education and care environment and avoid contact with unfamiliar animals in public situations, unless it is a planned activity.

2. Un- invited Visitors

2.1 There are situations that may spontaneously occur, involving animals. For example, an animal or bird makes its way into an education and care service.



Educators/staff may use this as a spontaneous learning experience for the children. At all times the safety and wellbeing of the children will be maintained.

- 2.2 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 may be the National Parks and Wildlife Service – 1300 361 967 (8.30-5.00pm) or NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service Inc (WIRES) on 1300 094 737.
- 2.3 The animals movements should be monitored to ensure a speedy and efficient capture by a professional, but priority is to be given to the educator/staff, child and family safety. At no time is the potentially dangerous animal, insect or bird to be approached or touched by the children, educator/staff or families.

3. Pests and Vermin

- 3.1 Educators and Staff are responsible for monitoring and ensuring that appropriate pest control practices are maintained at their Service. In the case of Out of School Hours Care, the Service Supervisor will liaise with the School principal or appropriate delegate to ensure this is managed. Educators/staff will monitor any occurrences in the service to determine the success of control measures.
- 3.2 At all times the pest control measures will consider the health, safety and welfare of the children in care. For example – Educators choosing to spray their premises will not do this whilst children are in care.
- 3.3 Family Day Care Educators will identify on their annual home safety and compliance report how they will endeavour to ensure their service is kept free of vermin or pests. This is to be managed and monitored through daily safety inspections and an effective cleaning strategy.
- 3.4 Where appropriate, educators/staff discuss with the children safety issues relating to dangerous products, plants, vermin and objects.
- 3.5 Educators will thoroughly clean and disinfect areas that animals or pests have accessed in the education and care service with hot soapy water and remove of any faeces accordingly.

Approved By:



Nick O'Connor
GROUP MANAGER CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY

19 November 2015

