14 - Animal and Pets Children's Services Procedures

Effective from: 28 May 2021

Contact Officer: Coordinator of Children's Services

Next review date: 2- 4 years

File Reference: Registered on ECM

Related Policies/Legislation:

• Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 Cl 4, 99,100,101,102 and 168

 NSW Work Health Safety Act and NSW Work Health Safety Regulation 2011

National Quality Standard: QA 2.1, 2.2, 3.1 & 3.2.3

Related Documents and References:

- ACECQA (2018) Guide to National Quality Framework
- NSW Department of Health- https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Facts heets/petting-zoos.pdf
- Kidsafe NSW <u>www.kidsafensw.org</u> accessed October 2020
- Staying Healthy 5yth Edition-https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/r

 eports/clinical%20guidelines/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf
- ACEQA- Keeping Pets and Animals in Education and Care Services https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/infosheet

Superseded Procedures: 14 – Pet and Animal Procedure – V1.0 - 2015

Purpose

The Guide to the National Quality Framework (NQF) recognises the Services role in supporting children to understand and appreciate the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land.





Wingecarribee Children's Service recognises that having a pet at an education and care setting and/or a planned or spontaneous visit from animals can be a valuable part of children's education and care experience, enriching their learning about nature ecology and relationships.

The Service is committed to ensuring the service environment and practices uphold the health, safety and wellbeing of all children, adults, pets and visiting animals by:

- Encouraging and supporting responsible ownership of pets
- Ensuring strategies are in place that effectively manage health, safety and hygiene in all aspects of service provision
- Ensuring appropriate supervision strategies are maintained
- Encouraging educators to guide children about how to be safe around animals
- Ensuring educators guide children in caring for the needs of animals
- Ensuring educators have strategies in place to deal with uninvited animals including potentially dangerous animals
- Ensuring the control and management of pests and vermin in the service

Scope

This procedure 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' and the adult Household members residing in their premise.

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

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

Definition

Pets- refers to any domestic animal or livestock that are owned and/or cared for and permanently or intermittently reside at the Education and Care Service

Animals- refers to any animal that is not owned by the Service, which visits the education and care service. This including animals attending as a part of an organised incursion or a visit from the local wildlife.

Pests and Vermin- refers to unwanted animals and insects that intrude on the service environment

Direct Supervision - requires an Educator to be present in the immediate area with the children at all times and to be able to maintain visual surveillance. There should be no physical barriers between the Educator and children and the Educator should remain in close proximity to the children.

Procedure

- 1. Pet Ownership Family Day Care
- 1.1 Prior to commencing ownership of a new pet Educators will:
 - 1.1.1 Consider the suitability of the pet for the environment and develop a risk assessment
 - 1.1.2 Consult with the Coordination Unit Staff prior to a pet residing on the premise

- 1.1.3 Consult families, where possible
- 2. Considerations and risk-based approach to pets and visiting animals (all service types) Prior to purchasing a pet or inviting a visiting animal into an Education and Care Setting Educators are responsible for considering all potential risks.
- 2.1 Both Pets and Visiting animals
 - 2.1.1 Suitability of breed/type of pet/animal appropriate to the children and the Service against the ages and stages and levels of ability of the children in care.
 - 2.1.2 Training and temperament of the pet.
 - 2.1.3 Pet health care needs and upkeep including feeding, health care, care and cleaning. E.g. vaccination and worming.
 - 2.1.4 Adequate space requirements for pets/animals.
 - 2.1.5 Potential effects on the health and wellbeing of children and families. Example: known allergies or phobias of children in care.
 - 2.1.6 Consistently maintaining a safe, healthy and clean environment for children.
 - 2.1.7 Supervision of children engaging with the animal.
 - 2.1.8 The pet/animal's level of familiarity with children
 - 2.1.9 Children's prior level of experience being with animals and knowledge of 'safe behaviour' around pets/animals;
 - 2.1.10 The pet/animal's level of familiarity with children
 - 2.1.11 Children's prior level of experience being with animals and knowledge of 'safe behaviour' around pets/animals;
- 2.2 Pets Only
 - 2.2.1 Registration of pet where appropriate with the relevant authority, as applicable
 - 2.2.2 Work Health Safety Daily Checklist and cleaning strategy that includes the maintenance and upkeep of the environment. Consistent implementation and updating the risk assessment and strategies as required and notifying the coordination unit of changes.
- 2.3 Visiting Animals Only
 - 2.3.1 How the visiting animal experience will take place, including accessibility during the experience and where and how a visiting animal will be kept prior to and after the experience.
- 3. Family day Care Educators will:
- 3.1 Informing families of pets as a part of the enrolment interview and prior to obtaining a new pet.
- 3.2 Restrain any animal that travels in a vehicle with a child in care (e.g. by a fixed barrier or harness or in a cage)
- 3.3 Include information about pets in the Family Handbook.
- 3.4 Complete a risk assessment for all pets on the premises **or** if intending to purchase a pet complete a risk assessment and submit to the Coordination Unit for consultation prior to purchasing the pet.

- 3.4.1 Considerations to be addressed in the risk assessment include:
 - Pet health and hygiene
 - Pet bedding and food bowls and water (as applicable)
 - Management of pet faeces
 - Supervision, access and interaction of children to pets, in line with this
 procedure. (For pets which present a higher risk such as dogs and cats identify
 how these pets are made inaccessible to children both indoors and outdoors)
 - Allergy or potential medical considerations relating to children's exposure to pets.

4. Pets and Animals - All Service Types

- 4.1 Animal visits to the Service shall be, where possible, planned visits and a risk assessment conducted prior. Educators will ensure that children's interactions with visiting animals are directly supervised.
- 4.2 Educators will ensure that all pets, their enclosures and equipment are kept clean and hygienic. Food/water is available for the pet but kept out of reach of the children at all times.
- 4.3 Educators will ensure pets and visiting animals will not have access to children's bedding, toys, food preparation areas, eating surfaces or utensils and will ensure surfaces that come in contact with the pet/animal are thoroughly cleaned/sanitized
- 4.4 Educators will role modeling and teach children how to appropriately behave toward pets and visiting animals
- 4.5 Educators will ensure they adhere to this procedure on excursions away from their education and care environment and avoiding contact with unfamiliar animals in public situations, unless it is a planned activity
- 4.6 Animals visiting the Education and Care Service as a 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.

4. Uninvited animal

- 5.1 There are situations that may spontaneously occur, involving animals. For example, an animal or bird makes its way into an education and care service. If appropriate; Educators may use this as a spontaneous learning experience for the children. At all times the safety and wellbeing of the children will be maintained.
- 5.2 If an animal or bird is potentially dangerous Educators will act to ensure the safety of themselves and the children. If the animal cannot be removed safely by the educator, they must 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 or Wingecarribee Shire Council Ranger 48 680 888
- 5.3 The movement of the animal should be monitored to ensure a speedy and efficient capture by a professional, but priority is to be given to the educator, child and family safety. At no time should a potentially dangerous animal be approached or touched by the children, educator or families.

5. Pests and Vermin

- 5.1 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 will monitor any occurrences in the service to determine the success of control measures.
- 5.2 At all times the pest control measures will consider the health, safety and welfare of the children in care. For example Educators choosing to carry out pest control spraying at their premises will not do this whilst children are in care.
- 5.3 Family Day Care Educators identify on their annual home safety and compliance report how they 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.
- 5.4 Where appropriate, educators discuss with the children safety issues relating to dangerous pests, vermin and pest control products.
- 5.5 Educators will thoroughly clean and disinfect areas that pests or vermin have accessed in the education and care service with hot soapy water and remove of any faeces accordingly.
- 5.6 Sandpits will be covered at the conclusion of each day to prevent access by animals, pests or vermin.

Approved by:

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