

Policy and procedure Animals

Purpose

To provide clear guidelines for Acacia's educators and families in having animals as part of our educational program including incursions.

- Our service aims to provide a safe and hygienic environment that minimises the risk of a child being harmed by an animal.
- to educate children in the proper care of animals.
- provide a safe environment for all children which ensures their safety, health and wellbeing

EXPLANATION

Having animals at the centre gives children the opportunity to interact with animals and learn valuable life skills that they can use throughout their future lives. Animals can help children foster their sense of identity and wellbeing whilst acquiring skills such as nurturing, responsibility, empathy and numeracy and literacy.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day-to-day Charge, staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Acacia children's centres including during offsite excursions and activities.

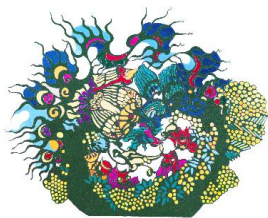
RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider and Persons with Management or Control are responsible for:

- providing leadership for an organisational culture of accountability for child safety which is open to scrutiny and is continuously reviewed and improved
- advising staff of current legislation, and their legal and duty of care obligations (Regulation 84)
- undertaking child safety reviews and developing an action plan in consultation with staff, parents/guardians and children to maintain Children's Safety
- notifying DET within 24 hours of a serious incident (refer to *Definitions*) occurring at the service
- reviewing this policy in consultation with staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, and children
- providing appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, volunteers and students to implement this policy (refer to *Sources*)

The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day-to-Day Charge are responsible for:

- keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
- ensuring continuous improvement in the implementation of animals and promoting an organisational culture of accountability for child safety which is open to scrutiny and is continuously reviewed and improved (refer to *Sources*)
- Once a pet has been selected, or a visiting animal identified and agreed on, develop a care and management procedure for this animal's well being while it is at the centre.



- providing appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, volunteers and students to implement this policy (refer to *Sources*)
- ensuring processes for responding to and reporting are followed when there are significant concerns for the safety, health or wellbeing of a child
- Undertake Risk assessment before any animal is introduced to the program.
- .all animals are cared for appropriately

All staff are responsible for:

- keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
- contributing to an organisational culture of child safety
- Children must be closely supervised when accessing any animal at the service
- Keeping animals out of food preparation areas
- Ensuring all adults and children will follow correct hygiene practices before and after handling animals. Please refer to staying healthy in childcare guidelines
- Ensuring Considerations will be made for children with allergy or religious beliefs to animals.
- The animal must be embedded in the whole centre's educational program.

Questions to consider include for introducing an animal to the program:

- Who will pay for the care and upkeep of the animal, including feeding, health care and cleaning?
- How will the pet be cared for on weekends and during service closure periods?
- What physical space is available in the service? Is it adequate for the pet you are thinking of?
- Are all educators and families happy with the decision to get a pet?
- What time will be available throughout the day to care for the pet or will educators be asked to give up some personal time for this?
- Are there any children or educators at your service who are allergic to, or have phobias of, animals?
- Adjust our service's policies and procedures to include handling of animals and pets. For example, hand washing policy will need to be updated to include washing hands after having contact with the pet.
- Check with a veterinarian to ensure the pet is suitable for children and a centre based setting, and check with the local health department for regulations and advice regarding pets in child care.

References

- acecqa.gov.au
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standard
- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

BREACH OF THIS POLICY

Any educator or staff found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action

Version 3	Endorsed By: CoM	Approved Date: Aug 2018	Reviewed: Aug 2022
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