



Animal Policy

Covers

- Pets in Registered Areas Procedure
- Pets in Unregistered Areas Procedure
- Animals in the Community Procedure

Intention

Nurturing Family Day Care Scheme acknowledges that animals can be a huge part of our daily lives and for those with pets they are a much loved member of the family. To ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of all enrolled children and animals, all parties will work to maintain an environment that takes into consideration their needs and welfare, regardless of where contact occurs.

Overview

This policy, and all policies and procedures that are associated with the Animal Policy, are implemented at all registered residences and approved venues by all educators, staff and visitors who are allied with the scheme.

This comprises of -

- Maintaining safe and hygienic registered areas of the residence.
- Respecting the boundaries of non-registered areas of the residence.
- Being animal aware while in the community.

The approved provider will ensure -

- That all animals are recorded during the Assessment (risk assessment) of a Registered Residence or Approved Venue, including information about their bedding, food, location, fencing, their breed and age.
- That educators are knowledgeable about when animals and enrolled children can interact with each other, while maintaining hygiene standards and the safety of all.
- That educators can discuss how enrolled children, especially those of school age, are aware of the non-registered areas of the registered residence or approved venue, how to communicate that these areas are out of bounds (signs at each location if able to be entered by school age children, for example a baby gate) and what is done to ensure they remain secured (locked doors are not to be unlocked, etc.).



- That educators are aware, and practice throughout the year, what to do in the case of animals approaching them in the community, whether domestic or wild.

Pets in Registered Areas Procedure

The approved provider acknowledges and understands that pets can be an important part of an educator's family and endeavours to ensure that the enrolled children and the animals are protected. Information about the animal/s and their time in the registered area of a registered residence or approved venue is gathered to uphold the safety of all parties. Educators will discuss with new enrolments about any animal that is kept at the registered residence, and the degree that these animals interact with the children.

The approved providers in partnership with family day care educators will request and document information about the animals in the registered residence -

On the Assessment of a registered residence or approved venue the following information is obtained;

- How are animal-children interactions limited to when an educator is in the room and supervising?
- Can the children (including school age) access the animal/s separate area through gaps in fencing, baby gates, etc. (add to risk assessment if so)?
- Are food preparation areas, children's eating and sleeping time free from animal interactions?
- How is the animal litter and food/water containers stored, removed or made inaccessible to children?
- Are animals regularly fed, cleaned, vaccinated, have flea powder applied to them and be regularly checked for fleas and wormed. Will animal/s in a cage have its cage regularly cleaned?
- Are fish bowls inaccessible to children and fish tanks that are accessible have catches to prevent children accessing the water, have safety glass, and/or laminated, and/or covered with safety film?
- Are dangerous pets such as snakes and spiders inaccessible to children in a manner that is lockable?
- If the animal is a dog, what breed, and age is it?

During interactions between the approved providers, coordination staff and educators, all parties will regularly discuss how interactions between enrolled children and pets can occur safely-

- Animals are to be secured in their separate area unless an educator is there to supervise the visit with the children; the educator is always to remain within the space during this time.
- The importance of the Daily Safety Audit of the Premises and how it will be followed carefully ensuring–
 - Animal equipment in the registered residence or approved venue that poses a risk; water containers, food bowls, food bags are removed or made safe.
 - All dog and cat faeces is to be removed, with other small animal excrement to be cleared as much as possible (bird, guinea pig, etc.).
- Animals are not to have any contact with children while they are eating or sleeping.
- After contact with animals, children and educators will practice hand washing procedures.
- The maintenance and upkeep of fences, gates, etc. that separate the animals from the children is maintained.



- Will read and edit the risk assessments related to animals on their OneDrive, ensuring that any additional information is documented and that this is reviewed each year or after an incident occurs.
- Will discuss with families and potential families about the animals on the registered residence or approved venue, the risk assessments and managements in place and if there are any related medical conditions that could be a potential or known issue for the child or parent. This is to be documented on the child's enrolment form.
- Will follow the Medical Conditions Policy and procedures if required.
- Will notify of any changes in the animals that are at the registered residence or approved venue.
- Educators will document any incident with an animal on the Minor Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Form, following all related policies and procedures that are attached to this.
- All incidents will be reviewed and changes to the related risk assessments will be made accordingly.

Pets in Unregistered Areas Procedure

The approved provider ensures that pets at a registered residence or approved venue have a space that is separate from the enrolled children, and this is generally located within a non-registered area. All parties will continue to discuss and maintain the importance of this area while educating and caring for children while with Nurturing Family Day Care Scheme.

The approved providers in partnership with family day care educators will ensure that those who have pets in the registered residence or approved venue will-

- Maintain the unregistered areas of the registered residence or approved venue.
- Communicate to children and families where the non-registered areas of the registered residence or approved venue are located (including on a map) and how they are maintained (baby gates are not to be opened, doors unlocked, etc.).
- Communicate with children and families about the importance of not entering a non-registered area during the hours when education and care is provided.
- Ensure that children do not enter these non-registered areas unless it is documented as an excursion, in which case all related policies and procedures will be adhered to including the notification in writing to the approved provider and families.
- Notify the scheme, review the appropriate policies and linked risk assessments, and change the environment accordingly if an enrolled child is to enter a non-registered area (not within the scope of a supervised excursion) in an emergency.

Animals in the Community Procedure

Many family day care educators, as part of their weekly routine, travel into the community for regular and non-regular excursions. During these times, domestic and wild animals may pose a risk to the enrolled children and associated adults. Being aware of potential interactions ensures that all parties are prepared to act and responded in a safe and appropriate manner.



All individual parties will ensure that when in the community the continued safety of enrolled children is met by-

- Being aware and alert to potential interactions with animals, including areas of wildlife (walking in/past bushlands), known homes that have dangerous/potentially dangerous dogs and unleashed dog areas in parks.
- Ensuring that the grass is well maintained and of a length that animals could be easily sighted when choosing a destination to visit/play.
- Educator will teach children on what to do in the event of observing animals.
 - Freeze, don't panic – keep children and known animals away from unknown animals (snake/dogs).
- Walk slowly backwards keeping a visual on the unknown animal – most times a snake will leave the area once you do or lay still hoping it is undetected.
 - Snakes and unknown dogs can be fast moving and dangerous and should never be approached.
- Play equipment will be checked for wildlife, including snakes and spiders, before the children engage with the area.
- Educators will document any incident on the Minor Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Form, following all related policies and procedures that are attached to this.
- All incidents will be reviewed and changes to the related risk assessments will be made accordingly.

Sources

Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations (updated October 2023)

- Section 3, Objectives and guiding principles.
- Section 165, Offence to inadequately supervise children.
- Section 167, Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards.
- Section 174, Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority.
- Reg 12, Meaning of a Serious Incident
- Reg 85, Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures.
- Reg 86, Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness.
- Reg 87, Incident, injury, trauma and illness record.
- Reg 100, Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion.
- Reg 101, Conduct of risk assessment for excursion.
- Reg 102, Authorisation for excursions.
- Reg 116, Assessments family day care residences and approved family day care venues.
- Reg 160, Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator.
- Reg 162, Health information to be kept in enrolment record.
- Reg 168, Education and care services must have policies and procedures.
- Reg 171, Policies and procedures to be kept available.
- Reg 176, Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority.
- Reg 177, Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider.
- Reg 178, Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by family day care educator.
- Reg 183, Storage of records and other documents

National Quality Standard (Updated February 2018)



- 2.1, Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
- 2.1.2, Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
- 2.2, Each child is protected.
- 2.2.1, At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
- 2.2.3, Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
- 3.1.2, Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
- 6.1, Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
- 6.2, Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
- 7.1, Governance supports the operation of a quality service.
- 7.1.2, Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.

Early Years Learning Framework

ACECQA

Australian Veterinary Association

Code of Ethics

Early Childhood Australia

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

Staying Healthy in Child Care - Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care (5th Edition) 2013

RSPCA – responsible pet ownership

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually.

The review will be conducted by:

- Approved Provider
- Employees
- Educators
- Families
- Interested Parties

Created: November 2019

November 2020

November 2021

November 2022

November 2023

November 2024

Review: November 2025