

# ANIMAL AND PET POLICY

Having a relationship with a pet and/or animal can help children develop a caring disposition and skills such as nurturing, responsibility, empathy and improved communication. Our Service will ensure that no animal poses a health or safety risk to children, staff or visitors of the service.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

QUALITY AREA 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
3.1.2	Upkeep	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
168	Policies and procedures are required in relation to health and safety

## RELATED POLICY

Environmentally Responsible Policy Hand Washing Policy Managing Unidentified Dogs Policy Physical Environment Policy	Sandpit Policy Snake Awareness Policy Supervision Policy Work Health and Safety Policy
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## PURPOSE

Our OSHC Service aims to provide a safe, hygienic and humane environment for all animals and pets that visit the Service, educating children in the proper care of animals.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Out of School Hours Care Service.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The National Quality Standard encourages educators to understand and appreciate the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land. Pets help children from a young age learn to care for other living things. They can teach a sense of responsibility, caring and tolerance. They can offer many opportunities for developing observational skills and provide basic natural science experiences. If the educators wish to have a pet in the OSHC Service, they must make all the decisions in consultation with management and families.

Whilst there are several benefits to keeping animals within the service, there are also a range of concerns which educators need to consider maintaining the safety and wellbeing of both the children and the animals. Encouraging direct contact and developing bonds with animals can help children to develop empathy. Providing children with access to animals within our OSHC Service will help them learn about life cycles and relationships and improve communication skills. We feel role modelling of appropriate behaviours with animals and guidance in caring for the needs of animals are beneficial for children.

## DISEASE:

As animals can spread disease, access to animals at the OSHC Service requires special consideration to prevent this. Health authorities identify that germs can be present on the skin, hair, feathers and scales, and in the faeces, urine and saliva of animals. While these germs may not cause disease in the animal, they may cause disease in humans.

## EFFECTIVE HAND WASHING AND CLEANING

Children and adults should employ effective hand washing after touching or feeding animals, or cleaning their bedding, tanks, cages or enclosures. However, it is important to engage children with these tasks as they learn responsibility through 'hands on' learning experiences.

### APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION AND CLOTHING

Children should also be appropriately supervised when they have contact with animals to avoid potential injury or harm to the child or the animal.

Ensure children wear appropriate clothing and footwear when handling animals and pets. Be aware of children who may have allergies to insects such as bees, wasps and ants that may be more apparent when animals are kept in an educational setting.

### UNINVITED ANIMAL VISIT

There are situations that may spontaneously occur, involving animals. For example, there may be a situation where an animal or bird has made its way into the OSHC Service. Depending upon the type of animal or bird educators may use this as a spontaneous learning experience for the children. At all times the highest priority will be to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children.

If an animal or bird is potentially dangerous such as a snake or spider, educators will contact an appropriate authority for assistance.

**Victoria:** [Wildlife Victoria](#): Australian Wildlife Emergency Response 03 8400 7300

A professional should monitor the animal's movements to ensure a speedy and efficient capture, but priority is to be given to Educator, child and family safety. At no time is the potentially dangerous animal, insect or bird to be approached or touched by Educators, children or families.

### PESTS & VERMIN

- Pest control will occur at the OSHC Service on an annual basis as a minimum.
- Educators will monitor any occurrences in the Service to determine the success of control measures.
- If pests and/or vermin are seen, or evidence of pests and/or vermin such as droppings, Educators will advise the management.
- Management is responsible for arranging additional pest control visits as required.
- Where appropriate, educators will discuss safety issues relating to dangerous products, plants, vermin and objects with the children.
- Educators will thoroughly clean all areas that pests have accessed in the OSHC Service with disinfectant.

- If the remains of animal or animal faeces have been found, the remains will be disposed of according to the local Council guidelines and the area where the remains were found will be thoroughly disinfected.
- Educators are responsible for assessing any situation in the OSHC Service where animals are involved to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children, families and animals.

## SOURCE

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

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Elliott, S., McCrea, N., Edwards, H., & University of New England. (2012). Sustainable outdoor play spaces in early childhood centres: Investigating perceptions, facilitating change and generating theory.

Frith, J., Kambouris, N., & O’Grady, O. (2003). Health and safety in children’s centres: Model policies and practices (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). NSW, Australia: NSW Department of Community Services. Retrieved from

[http://eduserve.com/sites/default/files/iccc\\_resources/Child\\_Care\\_Model\\_Policies.pdf](http://eduserve.com/sites/default/files/iccc_resources/Child_Care_Model_Policies.pdf)

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (amended 2020).

Kidsafe NSW Inc.: [www.kidsafensw.org.au](http://www.kidsafensw.org.au)

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012) (updated June 2013). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.).

## REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	SEPTEMBER 2020	NEXT REVIEW DATE	SEPTEMBER 2021
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• modifications related to unique OSHC context</li> <li>• consideration for risk assessment added</li> <li>• Links added to state/territory contacts for wildlife assistance</li> <li>• Snake Awareness policy linked</li> </ul>		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
SEPTEMBER 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar, punctuation and spelling edited.</li> <li>• Additional information added.</li> <li>• Heading altered to better reflect content – ‘Uninvited animal visit’.</li> </ul>		SEPTEMBER 2020

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sources/references corrected, updated, and alphabetised.</li> <li>• Related policies alphabetised.</li> </ul>	
SEPTEMBER 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latest updates include terminology and grammar improvements.</li> <li>• Added the section displaying related policies on page 1.</li> </ul>	SEPTEMBER 2019
DECEMBER 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated the references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard</li> </ul>	SEPTEMBER 2018