



Animals Policy

Animals can provide children with lots of learning opportunities, eg:

- caring for animals and being responsible for them
- learning about how animals grow and the environment they need
- increasing their vocabulary.

However, animals also present some health and safety issues. With this in mind we have developed this policy.

Animals in the Setting

- Animals' "homes" are cleaned out regularly to avoid any unpleasant smells and to prevent infection.
- The children are allowed, under close supervision, to help feed the animals if appropriate, but the animals' food is stored out of reach of the children.
- The children are informed of the "rules" of caring for the animals.
- The setting only keeps animals that are child-friendly.
- Children are permitted to hold animals provided that the setting has **parental permission**.
- Animals are monitored and the length of time for which they are handled limited to ensure that they do not become stressed, thereby reducing the risk of stress biting.
- Children are permitted to handle the animals only under staff supervision.
- The animals' food and cleaning materials are stored out of the reach of children.
- Children are supervised in hand-washing after handling the animals, and the reasoning for this is explained to them.
- We advise parents of new animals in the setting.
- Animals are regularly checked and taken to the vet if there are any concerns.
- The setting is sensitive in how to tell the children if an animal dies, working with parents to ensure that the children are given emotional support in the setting and at home.

Animals Brought into the Setting

Sometimes animals are brought into the setting, eg a guide dog. The setting ensures the safety of the children by:

- checking that the animal is child-friendly
- carrying out a risk assessment
- informing parents prior to the visit
- checking for allergies.

Visiting Animals

This might include, say, trips to local farms.

- A risk assessment is carried out prior to the visit and the farm or zoo's risk assessment is also obtained.
- Children are supervised in hand-washing.
- Parental permission is sought before the trip.

If your child has an allergy to any animals, eg long fur, please let us know. It would also be helpful to know if your child has any fears regarding different animals and if anything has triggered this fear, eg a bite by a dog.

If you have any concerns regarding this policy please contact us to discuss the matter.