



Marton Activity Centre

MAC Policy

MANAGEMENT OF ANIMALS

Document ID	: POL031
Amendment No	: 3
Quality Area	: MACQA3
Approved By	: Management
Approval Date	: 6/2019
Review Date	: 6/2020

Having a relationship with a pet/or animal can help children develop a caring approach and skills such as nurturing, responsibility, empathy and improved communication. Having a pet in the Out of School Hours Care environment enables children who are not otherwise exposed to animals learn these skills. The pet will become part of the daily educational program and lead to activities and learning about other animals.

POLICY STATEMENT

Having a pet at Marton Activity Centre can be a valuable part of children's education. Enriching their learning about nature, ecology and relationships. Our Out of School Hours Care Service aims to provide a safe, hygienic and humane environment for all animals and pets that visit or reside at the Service, which will educate children in the proper care of animals.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the children, families, staff, management and visitors of Marton Activity Centre.

PROCEDURE

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 basic natural science experiences. If the educators wish to have a pet in the 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 the Out of School Hours Service will help them learn about the life cycle and relationships and improve communication. We feel role modelling of appropriate behaviour with animals and guidance in caring for the needs of animals are beneficial for children.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER PRIOR TO HAVING A PET AT OUR SERVICE

- Who will pay for the care and upkeep of the animal, including feeding, health care and cleaning?
- How will the animal be cared for on weekends and during Service closure periods?
- What physical space is available in our Service? Is it adequate for the animal you are thinking of?
- Are all educators and families happy with the decision to keep an animal at our Service?
- What time will be available throughout the day to care for the animal or will educators be asked to give up some personal time for this?
- Are there any children or educators at our Service who are allergic to, or have phobias of, animals?
- What changes to our Service's policies and procedures need to be considered? For example, Hand-washing Policy will need to be updated to include washing hands after having contact with the animal.
- What is the health and safety risks?

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER INCLUDE:

- Some animals, such as lizards, turtles, snakes, spiders and tropical fish may not be an appropriate choice. Check with a veterinarian if you are unsure whether an animal is suitable for children, and check with the local health department for regulations and advice regarding animals in an Out of School Hours Care service. Some states and territories require a license for keeping certain animals.
- Animals that may be more likely to be suitable for an Out of School Hours Care Service may include goldfish, hermit crabs, stick insects, mice or rats. All of these animals are relatively low maintenance and can be left safely over a weekend if they are provided with sufficient food and water.

ASSESSING AND MANAGING RISKS

Whilst there are many benefits to providing children with access to animals and keeping pets at the Out of School Hours Service, there are issues that approved

providers and educators need to consider for the safety and wellbeing of both the children and the animals concerned prior to choosing a pet or having an animal visit the Service.

A risk assessment should be conducted when deciding the type of animal and the way the children engage with it.

DISEASE

Access to animals in the Out of School Hours Service requires special consideration to prevent the spread of infectious diseases because contact with animals can spread disease. 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. It is important to engage children with the cleaning of animal bedding, tanks, cages or enclosures, as they learn responsibility through hands on learning experiences.

APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION

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

SERVICE PETS

- Management and Educators should prepare children for the animal visit, gathering perception into how the children react to the pet.
- Management, Educators, children and families should consider the rationale for having a pet and long-term implications of such a decision prior to getting the pet.
- All pets and their enclosures are to be kept clean and hygienic with appropriate bedding and water.
- Food will be made available for all pets and animals but kept out of reach of children at all times.
- Any animal or pet kept at the Out of School Hours Service will be regularly fed, cleaned, vaccinated, and regularly checked for fleas and wormed.
- Animals including pets will not be allowed in the sand pit or any other play area. In event that this happens, educators will refer to and adhere to the Sand Pit Policy.

- Animals including pets will never be taken into the food preparation area nor will they be allowed near the eating or sleeping area.
- Anyone who has handled the animal or pet will immediately wash their hands after they have finished handling the animal or pet.
- Children's animal or pets will only be allowed in the Out of School Hours Service when management has granted permission.
- We will include in the program how to properly care for animals and how to treat them appropriately.
- Pets will not have access to children's bedding, toys, food preparation areas, eating surfaces and utensils

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 Out of School Hours Service. Educators may use this as a spontaneous learning experience for the children. At all times they will 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 1300 094535

New South Wales: National Parks and Wildlife Service - 1300 361 967 (8.30am – 5.00pm) or NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service Inc. (WIRES) 13 000 WIRES - 13 00 094 737

Queensland: Department of Environment and Heritage Protection 1300 130 372 or RSPCA Queensland 1300 264 625

Australian Capital Territory: ACT Wildlife- Hotline 043 230 0033

Tasmania: Bonorong Wildlife Rescue 0447 264 625 National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council- 1300 827 727

South Australia: Fauna Rescue of SA (08) 8289 0896 or RSPCA South Australia 1300 4 777 22

Western Australia: Parks and Wildlife Service: Wildcare Helpline: (08) 9474 9055

Northern Territory: Northern Territory Government: Wildcare Northern Territory

Darwin: (08) 8988 6121

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 Out of School Hours 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 vermin are seen, Educators will advise the management.
- Management is responsible for arranging additional pest control visits.
- Where appropriate, Educators will discuss with the children safety issues relating to dangerous products, plants, vermin and objects.
- Educators will thoroughly clean all areas that animals or pests have accessed in the Out of School Hours Service with disinfectant.
- If the remains of an 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 Out of School Hours Service where animals are involved to ensure the health, safety and well-being of children, families and animals.

CONSIDERATIONS

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health & Safety		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.2	Safety	Each child is respected
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions & adequate supervision to ensure children are protected from harm.

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 AND NATIONAL LAW

Education and Care Services National Regulations and National law NSW		
Reg	168	Policies and procedures are required in relation to health and safety

SOURCE

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
ECA Code of Ethics
Guide to the National Quality Standard
My Time, Our Place
Kidsafe NSW Inc. http://www.kidsafensw.org.au
Revised National Quality Standard.

SERVICE POLICIES/ DOCUMENTATION

Policies	Documents
Environmentally Responsible	Australian Children's Education & Care Authority
Physical Environment	My Time, Our Place
Supervision	ECA Code of Ethics
Hand washing	Revised National Quality Standards
Work, Health and Safety.	