



Animals in the Environment Policy (CHS 12)

Policy Rationale

The Cooks Hill Preschool Philosophy recognises our goal to “nurture children to become confident and inspired learners, who show care and respect for themselves and the world around them”. Therefore, ensuring responsible ownership of pets, animals or birds that may reside at Cooks Hill Preschool or visit the premises is vital. This policy also considers the management of unwanted visitors such as pests and vermin.

Cooks Hill Preschool will provide a safe, clean and humane environment for all animals and birds that visit or reside at the service. We will endeavor to;

- ◁ Ensure that the health and wellbeing of children is being maintained when engaging with animals.
- ◁ Ensure pest control measures are regularly undertaken; and
- ◁ Ensure there are procedures in place for removing unwanted animals, pests and vermin from the premises.

Strategies, Practices and Procedures

Centre Pets and Invited Visitors

Prior to commencing ownership of or visits by animals, Cooks Hill Preschool will;

- Complete a risk benefit/assessment tool,
- Complete a risk management plan and consult with families.
- Consider the following questions in the decision-making process: 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 the 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 the 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 your service who are allergic to, or have phobias of, animals? What changes to

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your service's policies and procedures need to be considered? What are the health and safety risks?

- Educators will ensure that all pets and their enclosures are kept clean and hygienic. Educators must ensure they have clean bedding and water. Food is available for the pet but must be kept out of reach of children at all times.
- Children must be supervised at all times when interacting with pets or animals.
- Educators will manage any health or safety risk for the children that may be caused by animals, such as asthma and allergies.
- Pets will not have access to children's bedding, toys, food preparation areas, eating surfaces or utensils.
- Animals and birds visiting the education and care service as part of the educational program are the responsibility of the owner(s). The educators will ensure that the environment remains safe and hygienic at all times during the visit. Educators will complete risk assessment paperwork in relation to the visit.
- Cooks Hill Preschool values educational programs such as "Living Safely with Dogs" to ensure children are learning how to approach dogs whether at home or out in public.

Animals and Birds Other than Pets or Invited Visitors

- 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 Preschool. 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. In NSW this authority is the Office of Environment and Heritage - 131 555 or NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service Inc on 13 000 WIRES - 13 00 094 737.
- The animal's movements should be monitored to ensure a speedy and efficient capture by a professional, 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.

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Pests and Vermin

- The Approved Provider will organise for pest control to occur at the Preschool on an biannual basis. 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 Nominated Supervisor.
- Educators will thoroughly clean all areas that animals or pests have accessed in the Preschool with hot, soapy water. 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 with hot, soapy water.
- Educators will be responsible for assessing any situation in the Preschool where animals are involved to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children, families and animals.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations , the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Links to Legislation & National Quality Standards

- Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011): 2.1.2, 2.2.2, 3.2
- Policy adapted from CELA 2018
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Regulations 103,168.
- ACECQA - Keeping Pets and Animals in Education and Care Services - www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-04/QA3_InfoSheetKeepingPetsAndAnimalsInEducationAndCareServices_0.pdf

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