

Intereach Family Day Care

Animal Safety Procedure



Applies to	Intereach Family Day Care (FDC)				
Policy	NQS Three: Physical Environment Policy				
Version	1.0	Date approved	1/12/2025	Next review date	1/12/2028

Objective

To ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of children in care by managing the presence and interaction of animals in the Family Day Care environment, while respecting family preferences and complying with national regulations and standards.

Background

Animals in Family Day Care gives children the opportunity to observe, interact and learn about animals. It can be a valuable part of a child's education and care experience, enriching the learning about nature, ecology and relationships. While there are many benefits to keeping animals in a service, there are also a range of issues that educators need to consider for the safety and well-being of both the children and the animals.

Responsibilities

Nominated Supervisor / Coordination Unit Staff

- Ensure this Animal Safety procedure is implemented and reviewed based on stakeholder feedback.
- Ensure a benefit risk assessment is conducted by educators that have animals/ pets at the family day care residence or when incursions involve the inclusion of animals/ pets.
- Review and approve risk assessments regarding animals and pets as required
- Identify issues that need to be considered for the safety and wellbeing of both the children and the animals concerned.
- Ensure children are appropriately supervised when they have contact with animals to avoid potential injury or harm to the child or the animal;
- ensure educators and staff model appropriate hygiene and safety practices when handling animals; and,
- Respond to family concerns or complaints regarding animal presence.

Educators

- Adhere to the Animals safety procedure
- Consider and respect the ages, skills and abilities of the children in care when identifying, in consultation with families what supervised contact, if any, they will provide between children and animals/pets
- Communicate with the coordination unit and families regarding the intent of a new animal coming into the service.
- Complete a risk assessment before introducing any animal to the service.
- Maintain a clean and hygienic environment, ensuring animals do not access:
 - Food preparation or eating areas
 - Sleep/rest areas
 - Children's toys, bedding, or learning resources

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- Closely supervise all child-animal interactions and remove the animal immediately after the planned experience
- Monitor the health and wellbeing of animals in care.
- Communicate with families about the presence and involvement of animals in the program on interview and respect their preferences.

Parents/Guardians

It is the responsibility of families to ensure:

- That educators are informed of any allergies, phobias, or cultural beliefs related to animals.
- Provide feedback or raise concerns about animal interactions.
- Support the service in maintaining safe and respectful animal practices

Procedure

Animals at the Service – Assessment and evaluation

Educators will consider the risks versus the benefits of including animals in the educational program.

Risk Assessment

- A detailed risk assessment will be:
 - completed on all animals/ pets in the Family Day Care residence;
 - prior to introducing a new animal/pet into the Family Day Care residence, and
 - for all excursions/ incursions involving animals (e.g., farms, petting zoos)
- Risk assessment will take into consideration:
 - the type of pet/ animal;
 - potential risks and hazards associated including those to the children, families, visitors and the animal; and,
 - risk minimisation strategies.
- Risk assessments will:
 - be provided to families on enrolment; and
 - have authorisations sought from families.
- Educator must notify the coordination unit staff of the intent to include a pet/ animal in their FDC service prior to this occurring to discuss safety measures.
- Families are consulted about any pets/ animals present at the service on initial visit to determine if the placement will be appropriate for children with medical conditions.

Supervision

- Children must be directly supervised at all times when animals/pets are present.
- Educators will teach children safe and respectful ways to interact with animals.
- Any signs of distress or aggression in animals or children will be addressed immediately

Animal-Free Zones and Times

- Animals are not permitted in or at:
 - Meal preparation or eating areas
 - Sleep and rest areas
 - Toileting or nappy change areas
 - entrances and exits

- Animals are kept separate from children when transporting both in vehicle.
- Ensure children have no access to food or water bowls, litter areas or animal bedding.

Hygiene and Cleanliness

- Animal enclosures must be cleaned and disinfected regularly. Children are not allowed to assist in cleaning of bird cages, fish tanks or other animal cages or pens under any circumstances
 - Children and educators must wash hands after handling animals or cleaning enclosures.
 - Sandpits and water play areas must be protected from animal access.
- Indoor play areas that have been accessed by animals must be thoroughly cleaned prior to the commencement of care. Cleaning procedures include vacuuming floors to remove pet hair and washing all surfaces. This requirement applies whenever an animal has been present in any area of the home that children in care will use.

Animal Health

- Animals must be:
 - in good health;
 - treated, wormed and immunised as recommended by a vet; and,
 - provided with clean water, food, and shelter.
- Sick or injured animals must be removed from the premises until recovered.

Preventive measures

- Children are not allowed to put their faces close to animals;
- Gloves are worn when handling animal faeces, emptying litter trays and cleaning cages;
- Animal faeces and litter are disposed of daily and more often, if necessary, faeces and litter are placed in a plastic bag and put it out with the garbage.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

This procedure will be reviewed every three years or when a change occurs and incorporate feedback and suggestions from children, families, educators, co-ordinators, volunteers, and students.

National Quality Framework

Element	Concept	Description
.2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
.2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service that is child safe

Element	Concept	Description
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision making and operation of the service.

Compliance and Reference

Legislation	Education and Care Services National Regulations consolidated 2017 Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Standards or other external requirements	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2017), <i>National Quality Standards</i> Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2017), <i>Guide to the National Quality Framework</i> Department of Education, Child Care Provider Handbook - September 2025
Internal Documentation	Enrolment and Orientation procedure Providing a child safe environment Supervision procedure Handwashing procedure Home Safety Audit

Document Control

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Next review date
1.0	15/04/2020	R. Phillips - Acting Senior Manager, Children and Family Services	15/04/2023
2.0	4/5/2023	M. Pifero – General Manager Operations	4/5/2026
1.0	01/12/2025	Split as standalone procedure for FDC and approved by: K Hyde – General Manager, Operations	01/12/2028