

# Early Years Services – QA2.19 Animal and Domestic Pets

TRIM Reference: D16/37049 Due for Review: 6 December 2025  
Responsible Officer: Coordinator Early Years

## Purpose

This policy outlines Surf Coast Shire Council's commitment to include animals, where appropriate, as an integral part of an education program without compromising the health and safety of families, staff, students, volunteers and visitors to our services.

The purpose of including animals in programs is to:

- Promote positive interactions with animals.
- Recognise and support the important ecological role that some animals play, (e.g. Chickens & worms) in working towards a more sustainable and environmentally friendly learning environment.
- Educate children in the appropriate care of animals.
- Ensure the appropriate care and protection of animals within an Early Years Program.
- Teach responsibility: children learn about the requirements of a living being such as food, water and exercise.
- Aid childhood development: animals help children develop nurturing and social skills. Developing positive feelings about animals can aid self-esteem and help children develop verbal communication and compassion.

## Policy Principles

This policy applies to:

Evidence of link to National Quality Standards: 2.3.2, 3.3.2

Evidence of link to Education and Care Services National Regulations: 116(e)

## Scope

This policy applies whenever animals are present in a Council managed registered Early Years spaces.

## Policy

### Strategies and Practices in Early Year's Settings

Implementation:

- All animals must remain outside the program until appropriate procedures and paperwork has been completed and approved by the Team Leader of the service.
- Animals may include (but are not exclusive of) any animals and insects deemed to have legitimate educational value for the children, will contribute to the educational program and/or considered appropriate for the environment by the nominated supervisor, Team Leader and where applicable other early years staff.
- Animals or pets will be closely supervised in any play area.
- If a pet or animal is going to live within an early year's program or be a regular visitor to the program, parents must be notified and an 'Introduction of a New Animal' form must be completed including a risk assessment management plan. In addition, parents and staff must be notified in advance to allow time to address, understand and manage any relevant allergies or concerns.

- The Early Years Risk Assessment Management Plan must detail any risks associated with having the animal or their equipment/bedding and accessories at the early year's program and how these risks will be managed.
- Where necessary animals must be fully vaccinated, wormed, free of fleas and appropriately checked by a veterinarian before entering the early year's program and removed if unwell or injured. Owners of an animal should be aware of and comply with all legal requirements regarding their animal's welfare.
- Animals will not be permitted in areas of food preparation including, but not exclusive to, kitchens and any area where children participate in food making.
- Animals must never be allowed to contaminate sandpits, soil, pot plants and vegetable gardens.

### Care of animals

- Any animal that is injured or unwell will be removed from the program.
- Animals must be kept in appropriate housing and are only released under adult supervision.
- Children must be closely supervised when accessing any animal or pet at the service.
- Appropriate housing will be adequately maintained by an adult.
- Animals will be given a designated area to rest away from the children.
- Any animal body product of the pet will be cleaned up and disposed of immediately.
- Animals must be considered and appropriately cared for on days of extreme weather and/or fire danger days when the service is closed. Animals kept outside must be brought inside and placed in appropriate housing with adequate food and water. In the case of fire risk days when the service is closed, where possible and safe to do so, remove animals from the facility to a safer location.
- Any injuries or illness to children/staff/animals will be dealt in accordance with appropriate policy/guidelines.

Day-to-Day Service Management of Health and Safety Policies  
Reviewed at monthly team meetings and as required.

### Definitions

Not applicable

### Related Procedure

Nil.

### References

#### **Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Policies**

D15/33004	Supervision of Children Policy
D15/35312	Child Safe Environment Policy
D14/94986	First Aid Policy
D14/105413	Incident, Injury Trauma and Illness Policy
D15/42638	Interactions with Children and Behaviour Guidance Policy
D14/70705	Excursion Policy
D14/70701	Educational Programs Policy
SCS-032	SCS Complaints Policy
MPP-018	SCS Workplace Health & Safety Policy

#### **Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Work Instructions and Forms**

D14/87971	WHS2.2 Early Years Risk Assessment Management Plan
D16/78011	Introduction of a New Animal Form

**Other References**

Resources and Further Readings

- National Health and Medical Research Council (2012) Staying Healthy in Early Childhood and Care: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care, 5th Edition, and Commonwealth of Australia: Canberra.
- Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011
- NCAC Putting Children First. Keeping Pets in Child Care, Issue 36 December 2010.
- Early Years Learning Framework – Belonging, Being, Becoming
- ACECQA - Guide to the National Quality Standard
- DEPI - Pets
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- ACECQA National; Quality Framework Resource Kit ([www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au))
- Childcare service Handbook 2011-2012 (DEEWR)
- VEYLDF, EYLF, MTOP

**Document History**

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1	Approved	Manager Aged and Family 1 April 2016
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3	Amended	Manager Community Strengthening 6 December 2018
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5	Amended	Manager Community Strengthening 31 August 2021
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