



## 3.01 Animal Policy

### POLICY STATEMENT

Having a relationship with animals can help children develop a caring approach and skills such as nurturing, responsibility, empathy and improved communication. Having animals in an early childhood environment enables children who are not otherwise exposed to animals learn these skills. Animals will become part of the daily educational program and lead to activities and learning about other animals.

### AIM

Having animals at our service can be a valuable part of children's education. Enriching their learning about nature, ecology and relationships. Our 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.

### STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

The National Quality Standards encourages educators to understand and appreciate the natural environment and the independence between people, plants, animals and the land. Animals help children from a young age learn to care for other living things. They can teach a sense of responsibility, caring, empathy and tolerance. They can offer many opportunities for developing observational skills and basic natural science experiences.

Encouraging direct contact and developing bonds with animals can help children to develop empathy. Providing children with access to animals within our service will help them learn about the life cycle and relationships and improve communication. We feel role modelling of appropriate behaviours with animals and guidance in caring for the needs of animals are beneficial for children.

#### **Mr. Alby – Therapy dog in Training (expected completion date Mid 2019)**

Here at St Nicholas Preschool, Mr. Alby is a big part of the centre philosophy and day-to-day education. Our school dog Alby assists educators to scaffold the necessary sense of belonging and connection to our service environment. Alby is recognised as the children's fourth teacher, playing a crucial role in supporting their learning and connectedness to their world.

#### **Information about the Samoyed Breed**

Samoyed's are a special breed and are fantastic with children. They are extremely friendly, outgoing and a devoted dog. Alby loves all people, especially young children and will often be observed watching over the yard. For more information on Samoyed click the following links:

- Overview of the Samoyed breed  
<http://www.petwave.com/Dogs/Breeds/Samoyed/Personality.aspx>
- Survey of Samoyed owners interactions with Children  
<https://iheartdogs.com/knowledge-base/breed/samoyeds/is-your-samoyeds-good-with-children/>

### Assessing and Managing Risks

Whilst there are many benefits to providing children with access to animals and keeping pets at the service, there are issues which have been considered for the safety and wellbeing of children, families, visitors and the animals who visit the service. A risk assessment has been conducted for having a dog as part of the day-to-day educational program – See Risk Assessment pg. 7

### Disease

Access to animals requires special consideration to prevent the spread of infectious diseases as 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. The following hygiene practices are in place to ensure the health and safety of all children:

- Alby is washed and groomed monthly to ensure his hair and skin is cleaned
- Alby is vaccinated and has monthly protection against fleas, ticks, intestinal worms, and heartworm
- Animals will never be taken into the food preparation area nor will they be allowed near the eating or sleeping area.
- Children must wash their hands after playing with Alby and when transitioning from the outdoor environment to indoors.

The following procedure is in place for dog faeces:

1. Collect faeces with nappy bag – ensure gloves are worn
2. Dispose of nappy bag and gloves in commercial bin outside the centre
3. Wash hands
4. Rinse area with hot water and detergent
5. Sanitise area with disinfectant
6. Wash hands

The following procedure is in place for dog urine:

1. Rinse area with hot water and detergent
2. Sanitise area with disinfectant
3. Wash hands

### Effective hand washing

Children, educators, families and visitors must employ effective hand washing techniques after touching, walking or feeding Alby and when transitioning from the outdoor environment to indoors.

### Appropriate supervision

Children are supervised when interacting with Alby to avoid potential injury or harm to the child or the animal. Educators will frequently engage in conversations with the children about positive animal interactions and respect for animals whilst interactions are taking place.

### Walking Alby

A small group of 4-6 children and 2 educators will participate in walking Alby around the Yarralumla community each week. They will be educated about road safety and play a fundamental role in taking responsibility of Alby's wellbeing. A risk assessment is conducted and permission for local ongoing excursions is requested annually. Children and educators wear high visibility safety vests to ensure they are visible to passing by cars.

In relation to the centre chickens & fish, educators will:

- Assist children in cleaning the animal's habitat regularly
  - Chickens – twice a week
  - Fish – Monthly
- Animals will be feed daily with the assistance of children
- Nesting boxes for the chickens will be freshened daily
- Children will collect the eggs from the chickens, wash them in warm water and bring them to the office to collect and distribute to families. Use warm water, not cold water. Warm water can cause the contents of the egg to expand against the shell, helping to prevent bacteria to enter through the shell. Cold water can cause the contents of the egg to shrink, creating a vacuum that can pull bacteria into the egg through the porous shell.
- Animals will never be taken into the food preparation area nor will they be allowed near the eating or sleeping area.
- Children must wash their hands after feeding, cleaning or touching animals and when transitioning from the outdoor environment to indoors.

#### 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 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. [ACT Wildlife Hotline – 0432 300 033](#) or [ACT Canberra Connect 13 22 81](#)

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 Education and Care Service quarterly.
- 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.
- 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 Education and Care 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 Education and Care Service where animals are involved to ensure the health, safety and well-being of children, families and animals.

#### EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

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##### Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW

- 168 - Policies and procedures are required in relation to health and safety

#### SOURCE LIST

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This section contains websites, industry bodies, or Legislation that have been used to assist in sourcing the information for this policy. It also acts as a guide to sourcing further reading on each relevant policy.

- [Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority](#)
- [Early Childhood Australia - Code of Ethics](#)
- [Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#)
- [Guide to the National Quality Standard](#)
- [Revised National Quality Standard](#)
- [Kidsafe NSW Inc.](#)
- NSW Department of Health - [Petting Zoos and Personal Hygiene Factsheet](#)
- Bone, J. (2013) [The animals as the fourth educator: A literature review of animals and young children in pedagogical relationships](#). Australasian Journal of Early Childhood 38(2) Deakin West ACT: Early Childhood Australia.
- [Cleaning & storing farm fresh eggs](#)

#### RELATED POLICIES

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- 1.01 Educational Curriculum Policy
- 2.07 Handwashing Policy
- 2.15 Supervision Policy
- 6.05 Orientation of Families Policy

#### POLICY REVIEW

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The review schedule has been developed using a risk assessment methodology with consideration given to sector, industry, and legislative changes.

Date reviewed	Policy changed	Modifications	Next Review Date
June 2018	Yes	Minor adjustments made to wording, included walking Alby within the local community.	June 2019