

Policy statement

Children learn about the natural world, animals and other living creatures, as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. This may include contact with animals, or other living creatures, either in the setting or on visits. We aim to ensure that this is in accordance with sensible hygiene and safety controls.

Legal Framework

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017
- The Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1999

Procedures

Animals in the setting as pets

- We take account of the views of parents and children when selecting an animal or creature to keep as a pet in the setting.
- We carry out a risk assessment with the knowledgeable person accounting for any hygiene or safety risks posed by the animal or creature; the animal should be fully vaccinated where appropriate.
- We take into consideration any risk to children with an allergy to domestic pets.
- We provide suitable housing for the animal or creature and ensure this is cleaned out regularly and is kept safely.
- We ensure the correct food is offered at the right times.
- We make arrangements for weekend and holiday care for the animal or creature.
- Children are taught correct handling and care of the animal or creature and are supervised.
- Children wash their hands after handling the animal or creature and do not have contact with animal soil or soiled bedding.
- If animals or creatures are brought in by visitors to show the children they are the responsibility of the owner.
- The owner carries out a risk assessment, detailing how the animal or creature is to be handled and how any safety or hygiene issues will be addressed.

Visits to farms or other animal attractions

- Before a visit to a farm a risk assessment is carried out – this may take account of safety factors listed in the farms own risk assessment which should be viewed.
- A major outings record sheet is completed for the visit.

- Before the visit:
 - Discuss and agree with staff, volunteers and parents their roles and responsibilities during the visit. In particular, they must understand the need to make sure that the children wash, or are helped to wash, their hands thoroughly after contact with animals and before eating.
 - Check if any of the children have an allergy which will need a specific risk assessment.
 - Parents should be made aware of appropriate clothing, including suitable footwear. (You should liaise with the attraction to ascertain what this is).
 - On the day of the visit parents should check that cuts, grazes etc. on children's hands are covered with a waterproof dressing.

- Discuss and agree the rules for the visit with staff, volunteers, parents and the children:
 - Listen carefully and follow the instructions and information given by the site staff.
 - The children must not eat, drink or chew anything (including sweets) outside the areas in which you permit them to do so.
 - Eat only food that is brought with them or food for human consumption that is bought on the premises, in designated areas.
 - Never eat food that has fallen to the ground.
 - Do not suck fingers or put hands, pens, pencils or crayons etc. in mouths.
 - Never taste animal foods.
 - Do not kiss animals or put face near animals.
 - Cleansing wipes or anti-bacterial gels are not a substitute for hand washing.
 - Always wash hands thoroughly before and after eating, after any contact with animals and again before leaving the site.
 - Wash hands after changing their footwear.
 - Do not climb on to walls, fences, gates or animal pens etc.
 - Do not use or pick up tools (e.g. spades and forks) or touch other work equipment unless permitted to do so by site staff.
 - Approach and handle animals quietly and gently.
 - Do not chase, frighten or torment the animals.
 - Do not wander off into unsupervised or prohibited areas e.g. manure heaps.

- Before leaving:
 - Where practical and possible, clean or change the children's footwear before leaving.
 - Clean buggy wheels if used.
 - Allow plenty of time for hand washing before leaving the site so that the children do not have to rush.

- After the visit:
 - If a member of the group shows signs of illness (e.g. sickness or diarrhoea) after a visit, advise them or their parent/carer to visit the doctor and explain that they have had recent contact with animals. Please also contact the attraction you visited and inform them of the illness.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup

Held on:

Date to be reviewed:

Signed on behalf of the committee:

Name of signatory:

Role of signatory:

All staff members and committee members will sign to indicate they have read, understood and agreed with the above policy.