

ANIMALS AT KINDER POLICY

Best Practice – Quality Area 3

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines for procedures to be implemented at Blackburn Preschool to ensure:

- the care of animals and children's welfare through the provision of an environment and learning program that is safe and appropriate for all involved.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Blackburn Pre School is committed to the care of animals and children's welfare through;

- implementing and following effective hygiene practices as outlined in our Hygiene policy
- creating a risk assessment process; including assessment of potential allergies or illnesses that children may suffer as a result of coming into contact with animals
- creating a program that teaches and encourages children to care for animals safely and humanely, and that is in line with their comfort level
- informing educators, staff, volunteers, children and families on the importance of adhering to the *Animals at Kinder* to maintain a safe environment for all users, and communicating the shared responsibility between all involved in the operation of the service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Blackburn Preschool, including during offsite excursions and activities.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Standard 3.2 of the National Quality Standard (NQS) requires the service to care for the environment and support children to become environmentally responsible..

The Guide to the National Quality Standard encourages educators to understand and appreciate the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land (p.189, 2017).

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Observing, interacting with and learning to care for an animal can be a valuable part of a child's education and care experience, enriching their learning.

Encouraging direct contact and developing bonds with animals, can help children build empathy (Thompson and Gullone, 2003, p.175). Providing children with access to animals in

an education and care service can help them learn about the life cycle and relationships, and improve communication.

Contemporary thinkers, such as Bone (2013), put forward the notion of 'animals as the fourth teacher' building on the work of Malaguzzi in the town of Reggio Emilia. Malguzzi's ideology positions the parent as the child's first teacher, the educator as the second and the environment as the third teacher, emphasising the crucial role they all play in supporting children's learning.

With this in mind, including animals in Blackburn Preschool's program aims to support children's learning, particularly in relation to:

- Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity: Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.
- Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world: Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

(Victorian Early Years Learning Framework, Framework For Children from Birth to Eight Years)

4. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Publication 'Keeping Pets and Animals in Education and Care Services' on the ACECQA website www.acecqa.gov.au

Service policies

- *Administration of Medication Policy*
- *Administration of First Aid Policy*
- *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*
- *Hygiene Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff and volunteers are provided with a copy of this policy and have a clear understanding of the procedures and practices outlined within
- Disease
 - Access to animals in an education and care service requires special consideration to prevent the spread of infectious diseases because 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.
- Effective hand washing and cleaning
 - Children and adults should employ effective hand washing after touching or feeding animals, or cleaning their bedding, tanks, cages or enclosures. Cleaning of bedding, tanks, cages or enclosures can be part of the learning experience.
- Appropriate supervision
 - Children should also be appropriately supervised by a staff member when they have contact with animals to avoid potential injury or harm to the child or the animal.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- developing effective hygienic systems for cleaning, and caring for the animals environment
(see Hygiene Policy). Animals may include Guinea Pigs, chickens, rabbits, fish, turtles.

Certified Supervisors and other educators are responsible for:

- Separating hand towels for handling animals, to be washed separately to bathroom hand towels. Hand towels to be washed weekly.
- Maintaining vigilance about handwashing after handling
- To avoid a child being accidentally nipped, we will not allow to children to hand feed the animals directly.
- If a child is bitten, first aid will be administered. Bite area would be flushed, covered, parents notified, and tetanus status checked.
- If an animal appears unwell, it will be taken to the RSPCA or a registered vet for an assessment. COM approval required for any treatment.
- Caged rodents (e.g. Guinea Pigs) are moved indoors overnight for safety and wellbeing. Indoors when weather conditions are extreme (hot, cold, wet)
- Caged rodents won't be left at kinder over weekends when extreme heat or cold is expected.
- Indoor and outdoor cages will be cleaned a minimum of once a week. This includes replacement of newspaper and straw.
- Enclosures are washed out once a month.
- Fresh water daily, hay always available and grain and vegetables offered frequently.
- Food and hay stored in sealed container at back of shed, out of children's access.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- informing the service if their child has an allergy to animals

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.**EVALUATION**

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy and ensure satisfactory resolutions have been achieved
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Handwashing guidelines

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Blackburn Pre School on 1 May 2018.

NEXT REVIEW DATE: APRIL 2023

How to wash hands

STAYING HEALTHY | 5TH EDITION | 2013

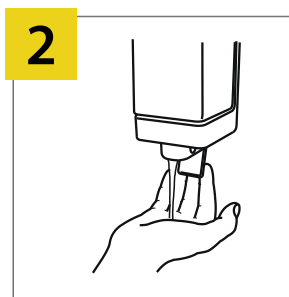


A hand wash should take around 30 seconds.



1

Wet hands with running water (preferably warm, for comfort).



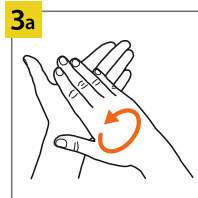
2

Apply soap to hands.



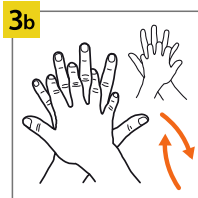
3

Lather soap and rub hands for at least 15 seconds, including:



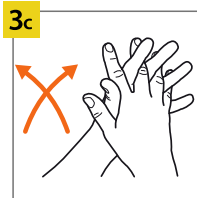
3a

palm to palm,



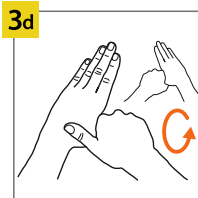
3b

back of hands,



3c

in between fingers and back of fingers,



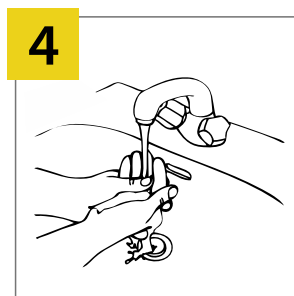
3d

around thumbs and



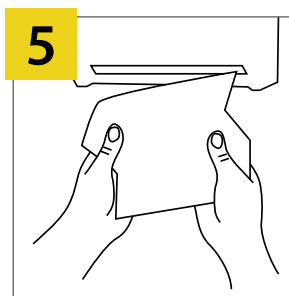
3e

tips of fingers.



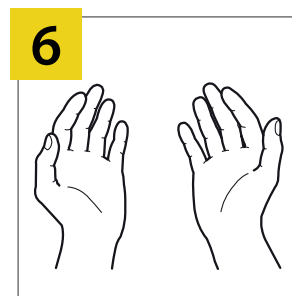
4

Rinse hands with water.



5

Dry hands thoroughly.



6

Your hands are clean.

THIS POSTER REFERENCES THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S 'HOW TO HANDWASH?' POSTER NHMRC Ref. CH55g Printed June 2013



Australian Government
National Health and Medical Research Council

NHMRC

WORKING TO BUILD A HEALTHY AUSTRALIA