

Keeping of Animals

1. Overview

1.1. Purpose

There are significant benefits to children having opportunities to interact with animals. This policy outlines how Junior Adventures Group (JAG) People will create this opportunity for children safely.

1.2. Scope

All JAG People, children and families are required to comply with the provisions set out in this policy and all other relevant policies, procedures and legislation.

1.3. Legislative Requirements

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, JAG is required to have policies and procedures in place to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the children in care.

2. Policy Statement

Animals play an important role in the educational and emotional wellbeing of children. JAG encourages including animals in the program where it can be done safely for the children, animals, JAG People, families and the community. JAG will determine the appropriateness of animals for the program.

3. Principles

3.1. Benefits of Caring for Animals

The introduction of animals to the education setting enables children to become environmentally responsible, build empathy and create an understanding of the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land. Learning to care for an animal can enrich learning, supporting social responsibility and respect.

3.2. Animals and Risk

Each opportunity to include animals in the program is risk assessed on an individual basis. The risk assessment is performed as part of program pre-planning. Animals cannot be brought into the program without a risk assessment being completed and risk mitigation strategies put in place.

Where additional procedures need to be introduced to support having an animal on site, they will be documented and proposed to Management for approval. Management needs to authorise any introduction of animals to a JAG program.

3.3. Communication about Animals in the Program

Communication will occur with Management and stakeholders about how the animal will be incorporated into the program, including how risks will be reduced. Communication with families will be planned, including timelines and messaging. Messaging will include the educational benefits of having the animal/s in the program.

3.4. Safe Handling of Animals

As part of the program, children will be educated about the safe handling of animals and pet care. This includes hand hygiene, supervision and other rules about animal care.

3.5. Hand Hygiene

JAG People, children and visitors handling animals will practice hand hygiene before and after interactions with animals.

3.6. Supervision

Children's interactions with animals on site will be supervised at all times. Team Members must ensure that adequate supervision, health and safety is maintained throughout the session. Team Members must work together to actively supervise all children and maintain open communication with all team members.

3.7. Child Safety

We safeguard children through our procedures and practices, with particular attention to their quality of care in our services. Policies and practices reflect the relevant legislation, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. JAG provides policies and procedures to equip JAG people with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe. Service Practice are continuously reviewed and improved to ensure current legislation is in effect throughout the business.

4. Key Terms

Term	Definition
Animal	A living organism that feeds on organic matter, typically having specialised sense organs and a nervous system and able to respond rapidly to stimuli
JAG People	Any adult that governs, manages, conducts work for or provides activities to JAG in a paid or unpaid activity spanning all levels of the organisational structure
Team members	JAG People who work directly with children

5. References

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
Children Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics (2016)
Educational and Care Services National Regulations
National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Care
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
Other Relevant Legislation
Regulation 77 – Health, hygiene and safe food practices
Regulation 103 – Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
Regulation 168 – Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170 – Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171 – Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172 – Notification of change to policies or procedures
Regulation 183 – Storage of records and other documents
Related Policies
HR policies for students and volunteers, including onboarding, orientation, induction

Related Procedures
Procedure Collections
Keeping Pets and Animals Education and Care Setting fact sheet: https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-07/QA3_InfoSheetKeepingPetsAndAnimalsInEducationAndCareServices.pdf
01P001 Programming Guidelines
Other
Quality Area 1, 2, 3: Standards 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.2
OCG Guide to Child Safe Standards - https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-scheme
CCYP Child safe Standards - https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations - https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles

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