

01 Health and safety procedures

01.18 Animals and Pets

Our Approach

At Peekaboo Childcare, animals can play a positive role in children's learning by helping them develop empathy, responsibility and confidence.

However, safety, hygiene and animal welfare must always come first.

This procedure explains how we safely introduce and care for animals in line with EYFS health and safety requirements.

Choosing a Pet

Before a pet is introduced:

- We listen to the views of parents and children
- We check whether any children have allergies or fears
- A full risk assessment is completed
- Owners and management must approve the new pet

We only choose animals that are safe, appropriate, and easy to care for in a nursery environment.

Caring for Pets Responsibly

To ensure high standards of care:

- Pets are kept in clean, suitable housing
- Enclosures are maintained regularly
- Pets receive the correct food and appropriate care every day

- Staff are trained to understand the animal's welfare and dietary needs
- Weekend and holiday care arrangements are in place

Nursery pets must be treated with dignity and respect at all times.

Health and Veterinary Care

To ensure pets remain healthy, if required we ensure:

- Pets are registered with a local vet
- We maintain pet health insurance or another payment plan
- Vaccinations, de-worming and other health checks are kept up to date

This helps protect both the animal and the children from illness.

Children Handling Pets

Children learn how to handle pets safely:

- Handling is always supervised by staff
- Children are shown the right way to touch and hold animals
- Children wash their hands after every contact
- Children do not touch animal waste or bedding

This promotes safe, positive experiences with animals.

Staff Hygiene and Safety

When staff care for pets:

- Staff wear single-use gloves when cleaning cages or bedding
- Soiled bedding is handled safely and hygienically
- Bleach or harsh chemicals are never used near animals

Some animals, such as snakes or reptiles, are not suitable because of infection risks.

Animals Brought in by Visitors

Sometimes visitors bring animals to support learning (e.g., farm visits, animal workshops).

When this happens:

- The owner remains responsible for the animal
- The owner must provide a risk assessment
- Safety and hygiene rules must be followed
- No animals on the Government's Banned Dog List are ever allowed onsite

No personal pets should be brought onto nursery grounds during arrival or collection.

If staff believe a family owns a banned dog, it is treated as a safeguarding concern and reported to the appropriate authority.

EYFS Links

This procedure supports:

- EYFS Risk assessment and preventing harm
- EYFS Safe premises and equipment
- EYFS Maintaining a safe environment
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Further Guidance

- *Good Practice in Early Years Infection Control* (Alliance Publication)
- Government guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/control-dog-public/banned-dogs>