

Animals in Nursery Policy

Health and Social Care Standards:

1.6 I get the most out of life because the people and organisation who support and care for me have an enabling attitude and believe in my potential.

1.7 I am supported to discuss significant changes in my life, including death or dying, and this is handled sensitively.

2.27 As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity.

Stramash, as an outdoor early years provider, acknowledges that children will come into contact with animals during stramash settings, whether it is micro-beasts, local wildlife or animals cared for by the nursery. For example, the Oban setting has on-site guinea pigs.

Stramash fully recognises the positive impact caring for and interacting with animals can have on a child's development in the early years, as supported by the guidance document released by the Care Inspectorate, ***Animal Magic*** (2018)¹. A passage reads:

"[She] describes children becoming much more insightful and developing their self-esteem because of their experiences [with the animals]."

Stramash is fully committed to providing an enriching and quality environment for children to explore and develop and within a site's individual community, may decide upon housing some animals on site (ie chickens, guinea pigs)

In order to promote safe and quality opportunities to observe and care for animals, Stramash sites operate on these principles:

- Parents/carers are made aware of all animals housed on the premises
- A full documented risk benefit assessment is completed
 - including considerations for children with any allergies
- Any animals kept by the nursery are homed appropriately and securely - in hutches etc
- Only staff have responsibility for deep cleaning out the animal homes (where applicable)
 - Protective equipment such as gloves and aprons are used
 - Any droppings should be disposed off away from play/eating areas
- Staff will ensure all pets have had all of their relevant vaccinations, are registered with the vet and are child-friendly

¹ [Animal Magic: The benefits of being around and caring for animals across care settings \(2018\) Care Inspectorate](#)

- Children will have no contact with animals not up to date with their vaccinations or who are ill
- Animals are not allowed near food areas
 - Animals will have their own area for exploration and housing
 - Food areas will be deliberately away from animal areas
- Children will wash their hands with soap and water after handling animals and before eating
 - There will be handwashing stations set up outside animal areas so children can wash their hands as they leave the area

Team Leaders will ensure there are robust protocols in place to manage safe and suitable care of animals and any risk of cross-contamination on the individual sites in conjunction with the guidance documented in ***Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings*** (2018)². These protocols are site specific. For more information, please speak to the site's Team Leader.

Wildlife

During walks and outings with Stramash, children will come across many different types of wildlife which can be used to educate the children about the wider world around them. It is also important that Staff protect the children and themselves from any hazards that can come from wildlife.

Staff will encourage children to observe wildlife and habitats rather than using hands on interaction. Any interaction must be followed by handwashing.

Dogs

Children are to be reminded not to touch any dog faeces if they see them. If any child does touch some then their hands must be cleaned immediately. Stramash staff will encourage children not to interact with unfamiliar dogs.

Death

Should an animal die, the approach by staff will be gentle and considered as per the individual children's needs and beliefs. *For more information, please see the Faith and Belief Policy.*

² [Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings \(2018\) Health Protection Scotland](#)