



Animal Health and Safety Policy

At Little Explorers Day Nursery and Preschool, we recognise the value that animals and pets can bring to children's emotional wellbeing, learning and development. Opportunities to care for animals help children develop empathy, responsibility and an understanding of the natural world.

We also recognise that contact with animals presents potential risks, including injury, infection and allergic reactions. Managing these risks is part of our safeguarding duty to ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing at all times.

This policy outlines how we safely manage animal contact within the setting and during outings, in line with EYFS 2025 requirements and health and safety guidance.

General Principles

- Children are always supervised when interacting with animals and are never left alone with them.
- All activities involving animals are risk assessed and carefully planned.
- Animals are selected based on their suitability for an early years environment.
- High-risk animals (e.g. reptiles or animals known to carry higher infection risks such as salmonella) are not permitted within the setting.
- Parents provide written consent for their child to be involved in animal related activities.

Health, Hygiene and Infection Control

- Staff and children must wash their hands thoroughly with running water and liquid soap after contact with animals. Hand gel is not used as a substitute.
- Children are supported to avoid touching their face, mouth or eyes during and after contact with animals.
- Animals are kept away from all food preparation, storage and eating areas at all times.
- Comforters, dummies and soft toys are kept away from animals to prevent contamination.
- All equipment, cages and areas where animals are housed are cleaned and disinfected regularly by staff.
- Staff wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves and aprons, when cleaning animal areas.

- Children who have been in contact with animals are monitored for signs of illness.

Allergies and Medical Needs

- All known allergies or phobias relating to animals are identified prior to any contact.
- Individual risk assessments are completed for children with allergies.
- Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure all children remain safe and included.

Animals Within the Nursery

- All animals are:
 - Registered with a veterinary practice
 - Regularly health checked and vaccinated where appropriate
 - Assessed for temperament and suitability around children
- Animals have appropriate, secure housing with access to quiet spaces away from children.
- Only staff are responsible for cleaning, feeding and handling animals unless part of a planned, supervised activity.

Visiting Animals and Pets from Home

- A full risk assessment is completed before any visiting animal is brought into the setting.
- Parents/carers are informed in advance and written consent is obtained.
- The animal must be:
 - Healthy
 - Appropriately vaccinated
 - Suitable for contact with young children
- All hygiene and supervision procedures outlined in this policy are followed at all times.

Farm Visits and External Animal Encounters

Before the Visit

- A full risk assessment is completed, including infection control measures.

- A pre-visit check or assurance is obtained to confirm:
 - Adequate handwashing facilities (running water, soap and drying facilities)
 - Clean and well maintained environment
 - Separation of eating areas from animal contact areas
- The provider must have appropriate public liability insurance.
- Staffing ratios are reviewed and adjusted based on children's age and needs.

During the Visit

- Children are closely supervised at all times.
- Children are:
 - Discouraged from touching their face or putting hands in their mouth
 - Not allowed to eat or drink in animal contact areas
- Comforters, dummies and soft toys are not taken into animal areas.
- Children are prevented from touching manure or animal waste.
- Any contact with faeces is dealt with immediately through handwashing.
- Food is only consumed in designated clean areas.
- Unpasteurised products (e.g. milk or cheese) are not permitted.
- Any produce consumed is washed with potable (clean drinking) water.

After Contact with Animals

- All children and staff wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water.
- Staff check clothing and footwear for contamination before leaving.
- On return to the setting, handwashing is repeated where appropriate.

Accidents, Injuries and Illness

- Any scratches, bites or injuries are:
 - Cleaned immediately
 - Recorded in the accident/incident records
 - Reported to parents on the same day

- Medical advice will be sought where necessary.
- If a child develops sickness or diarrhoea following animal contact, exclusion periods will be followed in line with health guidance.
- Ofsted will be notified of any significant incidents where required.

Staff Training

- Staff are trained in:
 - Infection control
 - Safe handling of animals
 - Recognising risks associated with animal contact
- Staff understand their responsibilities in maintaining a safe environment at all times.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if:

- There is a significant incident
- Guidance or legislation changes
- Practice within the setting is updated

This policy was adopted on	Reviewed
24/01/2022	4th May 2026