Animal Care and Hygiene Policy

Applies to: *All staff*

Policy Statement

Dots & Tots Day Nursery provides opportunities for children to learn about and care for animals especially chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs, while prioritising the safety and wellbeing of children, staff and animals.

Animals, Responsibilities and Daily Checks

Management is responsible for suitable animal care arrangements, veterinary support and oversight. Designated staff complete daily animal welfare, enclosure, feed, water, hygiene and security checks before children enter the area. Any concerns are reported immediately and access is restricted until safe.

Supervision, Consent and Safe Interaction

Parental consent is obtained during admissions. Children interact with animals only in small groups under direct staff supervision, with individual needs, allergies and medical conditions considered. Staff teach gentle handling and respect for animals; children never independently lift animals or enter enclosures.

Animals must be able to retreat from contact. Interaction stops if an animal is stressed, unwell or unwilling to be handled. We are committed to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to participate in animal care and interactions. Reasonable adjustments will be made to support children with SEND or additional needs, considering their individual abilities, sensory needs and any associated risks. Where parental consent has not been provided, appropriate alternative experiences will be offered.

Handwashing and Infection Prevention

Children and staff wash hands with soap and water after contact with animals, feed, bedding, enclosures or eggs, and before eating. Sanitiser is not a substitute. No food, drinks or dummies are permitted in animal areas. Handwashing facilities are next to the animal enclosure outside, and staff will ensure that children have access to these and can safely was their hands after contact.

Feeding, Water, Cleaning and Waste

Feed and bedding are stored securely, with fresh water available at all times. Enclosures are cleaned daily before children attend, spot-cleaned as necessary and deep-cleaned at weekends. Authorised adults manage waste and cleaning using appropriate PPE and safe storage procedures.

Animal Health, Welfare and Veterinary Care

Animals receive daily health checks and appropriate veterinary care. Sick or injured animals are kept away from children. Staff ensure suitable shelter, shade and weather protection, and cancel interactions whenever conditions could compromise safety or animal welfare.

Chickens, Eggs and Enclosure Security

Egg collection is supervised and followed by handwashing. Enclosures and gates remain secure; children do not chase escaped animals. New animals are assessed for health and temperament before any child contact.

Accidents, Incidents and Review

Bites, scratches, pecks, allergic reactions, escapes and other incidents are managed, recorded and reviewed under the nursery's first aid and incident procedures. Staff inform management promptly and seek medical or veterinary advice where appropriate.

Detailed controls are set out in the Animals & Animal Area Risk Assessment, which must be followed alongside the General Nursery Premises Risk Assessment, Daily Opening Risk Assessments and relevant nursery policies.

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner following a significant change or incident.

Policy Created: October 2026

Policy Review Date: October 2027

Version: 1.0

Signed

Christie Patton

Company Owner