



Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements: Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment

8.5 Animal Health and Safety

Policy Statement

Children learn about the natural world, its animals and other living creatures, as part of the Learning and Development Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This may include contact with animals, or other living creatures, either in the setting or on visits. We aim to ensure that this is in accordance with sensible hygiene and safety controls.

At Ladybird Forest Pre-School, we recognise that pets can help meet the emotional needs of children and adults. Caring for pets also gives children the opportunity to learn how to be gentle and responsible for others and supports their learning and development.

Procedures

Pre-School pets

At Ladybird Forest Pre-School, if we introduce a pet or an animal to the setting, we:

- carry out a full documented risk assessment with a knowledgeable person accounting for any hygiene or safety risks posed by the animal or creature, including considerations for children with any allergies or issues that individual children may have with animals or creatures.
- provide safe, suitable and secure housing for the animal or creature and ensure this is cleaned out regularly. Only staff have responsibility for cleaning the animal's housing and will wear personal protective equipment such as gloves and aprons.
- Ensure that the animal or creature is not allowed near food, dishes, worktops, or food preparation areas.
- ensure that children wash their hands with soap and water after feeding or handling the animal or creature and do not have contact with animal soil or soiled bedding.



Ladybird Forest Pre-School

- teach children the correct handling and care of the animal or creature and supervise them at all times. We also teach children the importance of washing ones hands after handling the animal or creature or its food.
- encourage children to leave their comforters and dummies away from the animal or creature to limit cross-contamination.
- ensure our staff are knowledgeable of the pet's welfare and dietary needs and ensure that the correct food is offered, at the right times.
- make arrangements for weekend and holiday care for the animal or creature.
- if necessary, register with the local vet and take out appropriate pet care health insurance.
- if necessary, make sure all vaccinations and other regular health measures, such as de-worming, are up-to-date and recorded.

Pets from home

- If animals or creatures are brought in by staff or visitors they are the responsibility of their owner.
- The owner carries out a risk assessment, detailing how the animal or creature is to be handled and how any safety or hygiene issues will be addressed.
- If a child brings a pet from home to visit the Pre-School as a planned activity, parents of all children who will be in contact or in the same area as the pet are informed.
- We complete a full, documented risk assessment prior to the pet visiting and analyse any risks before this type of activity is authorised.
- Pets will not be allowed near food, dishes, worktops, or food preparation areas. Children will wash their hands with soap and water after handling animals and will be encouraged not to place their hands in their mouths during the activity. The staff will explain the importance of this to the children.
- Children will be encouraged to leave their comforters and dummies away from the animals to ensure cross-contamination is limited.

Visits to farms

- A site visit must be made by a member of staff before an outing to a farm can be arranged. We check that the farm is well-managed, that the grounds and public areas are as clean as possible and that suitable first aid arrangements are made. Animals should be prohibited from any outdoor picnic areas.
- Before a visit to a farm, we carry out a risk assessment - this may take account of safety factors listed in the farm's own risk assessment, which should be viewed.
- We contact the venue in advance of the visit to ensure that there has been no recent outbreak of E.coli or other infections. If there has been an outbreak, we will review the visit and may decide to postpone it.
- We check that the farm has suitable washing facilities, appropriately signposted, with running water, soap and disposable towels or hot air hand dryers. Any portable water taps should be appropriately designed in a suitable area.
- We will ensure that there is an adequate number of adults to supervise the children, considering the age and stage of development of the children.
- We will explain to the children that they will not be allowed to eat or drink anything, including crisps and sweets, or place their hands in their mouths, while touring the farm because of the risk of infection and explain why.
- We will ensure suitable precautions are in place where appropriate e.g. in restricted areas such as near slurry pits or where animals are isolated.

During the visit

- If children are in contact with, or feeding animals, we will warn them not to place their faces against the animals or put their hands in their own mouths afterwards, and explain why.
- We will encourage children to leave comforters (e.g. soft toys and blankets) and dummies either at Pre-School, in the transport used or in a bag carried by a member of staff to limit cross-contamination.



Ladybird Forest Pre-School

- After contact with animals and particularly before eating and drinking, we will ensure all children, staff and volunteers wash and dry their hands thoroughly. If young children are in the group, hand washing will be supervised. We will always explain why the children need to do this.
- Meals breaks or snacks will be taken away from the areas where animals are kept, and children will be warned not to eat anything which has fallen on the ground. Any crops produced on the farm will be thoroughly washed in portable water before consumption.
- We will ensure children do not consume unpasteurised produce, e.g. milk or cheese
- Manure or slurry presents a particular risk of infection and children will be warned against touching it. If they do touch it, we will ensure that they thoroughly wash and dry their hands immediately.
- We will ensure all children, staff and volunteers wash their hands thoroughly before departure
- Outdoor footwear worn to visit farms is cleaned of mud and debris as soon as possible on departure and should not be worn indoors.
- We advise staff and volunteers who are, or may be, pregnant to avoid contact with ewes and to consult their GP before the visit.

Legal framework:

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

Further guidance:

- Health and Safety Regulation...A Short Guide (HSE 2003)

Relevant Ladybird policies:

- 1.2 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection
- 1.6 Missing Child
- 8.1 Health and Safety



Ladybird Forest Pre-School

This policy was reviewed by	Amanda Sanders - Pre-School Manager Victoria Grimes - Admin Manager Rebecca McGough - Chair
Date of review	13 th January 2024
Date for next review	13 th January 2025
Chair's signature	