



Animals and Nursery Pets Policy

Policy Statement

Policy Links:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (DfE, September 2025)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002
- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Infection Prevention Guidance
- Animal Welfare Act 2006

Policy Aim

At Clare House Nursery we recognise that caring for animals can provide valuable learning experiences for children. Animals encourage curiosity, empathy, responsibility and respect for living things whilst supporting children's understanding of the natural world.

Children are encouraged to learn how to care for animals safely, respectfully and appropriately whilst always ensuring the welfare of both the children and the animals.

The health, safety and wellbeing of children, staff, visitors and animals will always remain our priority.

Nursery Pets

Our nursery currently has:

- Fish and Shrimp

Our aquarium provides opportunities for children to:

- Observe living creatures.
- Learn about habitats and ecosystems.
- Understand responsibility when caring for animals.
- Take part in supervised feeding routines.
- Learn about keeping water clean and maintaining healthy environments.

Children are supervised at all times when helping to care for the aquarium.

- Bertie the Dog

Bertie belongs to the Janet and has a designated area within the administration office.

Bertie does not have unrestricted access to children.

Any interaction between Bertie and children is:

- Planned.
- Closely supervised by a responsible adult.
- Based on the individual needs and wishes of each child.
- Risk assessed.
- Children are taught how to approach and interact with dogs safely and respectfully.

Parents will be informed that Bertie is present within the nursery.

Visiting Animals

From time-to-time visitors may bring animals into nursery to enhance children's learning experiences.

Examples include:

- Dogs
- Rabbits
- Guinea pigs
- Chicks
- Lambs
- Reptiles
- Farm animals
- Mini beasts

Visits may support topics such as:

- Caring for Animals
- The Vet
- The Farm
- Life Cycles
- Habitats
- People Who Help Us

All visiting animals must:

- Be healthy.
- Be suitable for interaction with young children.
- Be appropriately vaccinated where applicable.
- Be accompanied by a responsible owner.
- Remain under the control of their owner at all times.

Health and Hygiene

To minimise the risk of infection:

- Children and adults must wash their hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water immediately after handling animals, animal equipment or food.
- Alcohol hand gel is not used as a substitute for handwashing after animal contact.

- Children are supervised whilst washing hands.
- Animals are not permitted in food preparation or food storage areas.
- Animal food and equipment are stored separately from children's equipment.
- Children are discouraged from touching their faces whilst handling animals.
- Any bites, scratches or injuries are dealt with immediately in line with the nursery's First Aid Policy.

Allergies

Prior to any animal visit the nursery will consider:

- Children's allergies.
- Asthma.
- Phobias or fears.
- Medical conditions.
- Individual risk assessments.

Alternative activities will be provided where necessary.

Safety Children are always closely supervised around animals.

Children are taught to:

- Be calm around animals.
- Use gentle hands.
- Respect animals' space.
- Never chase or frighten animals.
- Recognise that animals may become tired or stressed.

Animals are never left alone with children.

Any signs of distress shown by an animal will result in the interaction ending immediately.

Risk Assessments

A written risk assessment will be completed:

- Before introducing a new nursery pet.
- Before any visiting animal attends nursery.
- Following any incident.
- Whenever circumstances change.

Risk assessments consider:

- Animal welfare.
- Infection control.
- Allergies.
- Supervision.
- Children's individual needs.
- Escape risks.

- Cleaning arrangements.
- Emergency procedures.

Animal Welfare

The welfare of animals is of equal importance.

Animals will:

- Have suitable accommodation.
- Receive appropriate food and water.
- Have regular opportunities for rest.
- Never be subjected to unnecessary handling.
- Be removed from interactions if showing signs of stress.

Learning Opportunities

Children will be encouraged to:

- Develop empathy.
- Learn responsibility.
- Respect living creatures.
- Understand different habitats.
- Explore life cycles.
- Develop observational skills.
- Ask questions and investigate.

These experiences support all areas of learning within the EYFS curriculum.

Parents

Parents will be informed if:

- A new nursery pet is introduced.
- Visiting animals are attending nursery.
- There are any significant changes regarding animals kept within the nursery.

Parents should inform the nursery of:

- Allergies.
- Medical conditions.
- Phobias relating to animals.

Monitoring

The Manager will review this policy annually or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.

