

## Pets in the centre

### Aim

Loseley Fields Children's Centre recognise the value of having pets in the nursery to allow the children to have the experience and the opportunity to nurture and care for an animal. It enables them to learn about life cycles and encourages them to understand the needs of other living creatures.

### Methods

The choice of the pet should be appropriate to the setting. Pets should only be brought from a registered breeder or a pet shop.

The procedure for handling the pet at the centre:

- Washing hands before and after handling the pet and their habitat.
- The pet should be cleaned regularly.
- There should be separate cleaning implements for the pet like brushes, clothes and dust pan and brush.
- Children and adult must not kiss the pet.
- Pets should not be allowed in the food preparation area.
- Fish tanks are to be kept on a deep shelf so they can be observed by the children and staff safely.
- The pet should visit the vet once a year.
- The staff should promote a positive attitude to the pet. Staff who are nervous or anxious about the pet should not be asked to take care of it as this will be obvious to the children.
- Adequate arrangements should be made when the nursery is closed.
- If the animal is sick it should be removed from the nursery until it is better or has been seen by the vet to avoid infecting the children if it is contagious.
- When a pet dies it is best to be open and honest with the children but remember to be sensitive about their feelings and allow them to ask questions. Books might be able to help with this time.
- Always keep relevant reference books for the children to look at and help staff care for the pet.
- Children must never be allowed to clean the cages and to touch the faeces or urine.
- Ask vets or zoologists to come and visit the nursery with different animals so the children can experience a variety of different animals not just snails, hamster and tadpoles.
- Great examples of life cycles are tadpoles, butterflies, chicks.
- Consider borrowing animals so the children can learn about caring for them before you choose to buy one.

**Useful resources and websites**

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| This policy was adopted by ..... for Loseley Fields Children Centre. |                           |
| <b>Name:</b> .....   |                           |
| <b>Position:</b> .....   |                           |
| <b>Signature:</b> .....  |                           |
| <b>Date:</b> .....   | <b>Review Date:</b> ..... |