

Pet Policy (Updated EYFS September 2025)

Policy Statement: At Butterflies Nursery, we recognise the valuable role pets can play in children's emotional, social, and cognitive development. Interactions with animals can enhance empathy, responsibility, and curiosity, as well as provide opportunities for learning about nature and care routines. This policy outlines our approach to ensuring safe, clean, and respectful interactions between children and pets in our setting, in alignment with EYFS 2025 guidelines.

Types of Pets Allowed:

- We may introduce children to **age-appropriate pets**, such as:
 - Small mammals (e.g., guinea pigs, rabbits, hamsters)
 - Fish
 - Birds
 - Reptiles (where appropriate)
- **Larger or high-maintenance pets** will not be introduced unless thorough risk assessments confirm they are **safe for children**.

Health and Vaccinations:

- All pets will be **in good health**, and their **vaccinations and regular health checks** will be up to date.
- Pet vaccination and vet records will be **documented and accessible** for reference.

Child-Friendly Pets:

- We will only introduce pets that:
 - Are **calm, well-socialised, and accustomed** to children
 - Have a **non-aggressive temperament**
 - Do not pose a **significant allergy risk** to children

Hygiene and Cleanliness:

- Pet habitats will be **cleaned and disinfected regularly to minimise germs and odours.**
- **Proper handwashing routines** will be followed after handling pets or touching pet enclosures.
- Children will be taught about **safe and hygienic interactions with animals.**

Allergies and Sensitivities:

- Parents will be informed **in advance** about the presence of any pets in the setting.
- Parents will be asked to **disclose any known allergies or sensitivities** before their child interacts with pets.
- Where necessary, **pet-free areas** will be designated to accommodate children with allergies.

Supervised Interactions:

- Children will only interact with pets **under direct supervision** to ensure the **safety of both the child and the animal.**
- Staff will teach children **gentle and respectful handling techniques.**
- Pets will not be handled when they show **signs of stress or distress.**

Health and Safety Measures:

- Children will be **instructed not to disturb pets** while they are:
 - Eating
 - Sleeping
 - Resting
- Any pet that **exhibits aggressive or unpredictable behaviour** will be removed from the settings environment.
- First-aid procedures will be in place in case of **accidental scratches, bites, or allergic reactions.**

Educating Children About Pets:

- We will use pet interactions to teach children about:
 - **Animal care and responsibility**
 - **Pet behaviour and needs**
 - **Respect for living creatures**
 - **The importance of hygiene after handling animals**

Pet-Free Zones:

- Certain areas, such as **designated nap areas and food preparation zones**, will remain **pet-free** to ensure hygiene and prevent allergies.

Reporting and Communication with Parents:

- Any **incidents, concerns, or unusual pet behaviour** will be promptly reported to parents.
- Parents will be **informed about their child's interactions with pets**, including any **questions or observations from the child** about animals.

Alignment with EYFS 2025 Changes:

- **EYFS 2025 places greater emphasis on outdoor learning and hands-on experiences**, including **interactions with animals** as part of **Understanding the World**.
- This policy aligns with **EYFS 2025** by:
 - Encouraging **responsibility, curiosity, and respect for animals**.
 - Providing **safe, supervised pet interactions** that support **social and emotional development**.
 - Teaching children about **hygiene, safety, and kindness toward living creatures**.
- The **EYFS 2025 framework recognises the benefits of real-world learning experiences**, including **caring for animals, learning about nature, and fostering empathy**.

Review and Monitoring:

- This policy will be **reviewed annually** or more frequently if needed to ensure **ongoing compliance with EYFS 2025 and best practices**.
- We will **gather feedback** from parents, guardians, and staff to continually **improve our pet policy**.

Signed: Chrissie Day

Date: 2nd July, 2025