



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

Handling Animals Policy

Policy Statement

At Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup, we encourage children to learn about the natural world, its animals and other living creatures as part of our curriculum. In order to promote this contact with animals and other living creatures, we do from time to time allow animals into the setting and occasionally take outings to petting farms. Although we recognise the benefit this contact can have on the children in our care, as a Playgroup we do recognise the risk this can pose. To ensure we minimise the risk to children in our care we ask all parents/guardians to inform us of all known allergies and consent to their child handling animals prior to starting Playgroup. We refer to the HSENI information sheet on Preventing or Controlling Ill Health from Animal Contact at Visitors Attraction (including Teacher's Supplement) (See Appendix). We also take the following procedures below:

Procedures

Animals in the setting as pets

- We take account of the views of parents and children when selecting an animal or creature to keep as a pet in the setting.
- We check any known allergy details of all the children; these are recorded on each child's application form prior to starting Playgroup.
- We carry out a risk assessment with a knowledgeable person accounting for any hygiene or safety risks posed by the animal or creature.
- We provide prior notice to all parents/guardians prior to a visit or outing. We ensure all consent forms are completed.
- We provide suitable housing for the animal or creature while in attendance at Playgroup.
- We make sure all vaccinations and other regular health measures, such as de-worming are up-to-date and recorded, for any animal entering our setting.
- Children are taught correct handling and care of the animal or creature and are supervised.
- Children wash their hands after handling the animal or creature and do not have contact with animal soil or soiled bedding.
- Staff wear disposable gloves when cleaning handling soiled items from animal.
- As animals or creatures are brought in by visitors to show the children, the pet will remain the responsibility of pet owner.



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- The pet owner will assist Playgroup leader to carry out a risk assessment, detailing how the animal or creature is to be handled and how any safety or hygiene issues will be addressed.

This policy was adapted at a meeting of our playgroup held on the 1st September 2026.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the management team to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

This policy was reviewed by the Ballygawley Early Years Management Committee on:

Date: 01/09/2026

Signed:
(on behalf of the Management Committee)

Name and Position: Iona Devine, Chairperson

Reviewed on:

Date: Signed: Position:

Date: Signed: Position:

Date: Signed: Position:

This policy links with the following policies;

- Emergency Plan policy
- First Aid policy
- Food and Drink policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Infection Prevention and Control policy
- Management of Risks Associated with the Care of Individual Service Users policy
- Reporting and Recording Accidents and Incidents policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- HSENI Info Sheet Preventing or Controlling Ill Health from Animal Contact at Visitor Attractions (Including Teacher's Supplement)