**Animal and Pet Policy**

**Policy:**

Animals can provide a variety of productive learning experiences for students. Our program is committed to the health and safety of each child and family we serve. It is for this reason and to ensure compliance this policy has been developed to define procedures for children’s interactions with animals while in our care. These guidelines apply to animal and pet interactions in the classroom, on field trips, during family engagement activities, at socializations, and visiting pets.

**Procedure:**

Many types of animals carry salmonella, e-coli, rabies, parasites, fungi and/or a variety of other diseases that can be transferred to humans. As required or recommended by the above listed sources, the following animals are prohibited and will not be kept at or brought onto the grounds of our facility:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * Rabbits | * Squirrels | * Turtles |
| * Bats | * Hermit Crabs | * Poisonous animals |
| * Wolf-Dog Hybrids | * Stray animals | * Chickens and ducks |
| * Aggressive animals | * Reptiles and amphibians | * Birds |
| * Ferrets | * Animals less than one year of age | * Animals in estrus |

* The Parent/Guardian Release form must be signed prior to the child’s interaction with any animals at school or on field trips. The Parent/Guardian Release form states: I give permission to have my child participate in activities that involve having/bringing animals into the classroom (Other than those animals on the prohibited list). Consult parents about possible pet allergies making sure that proper allergy paperwork is completed and there is no contact with that animal.
* Any pet or animal present at the facility, indoors or outdoors, must be in good health, free from disease, be fully immunized, and be maintained on a flea, tick, and worm control program. A current (time-specified) certificate from a veterinarian shall be on file in the facility, stating that the specific pet is up to date with their immunizations and free from conditions that may pose a threat to children’s health.
* All contact between animals and children will be supervised by a staff person who is close enough to remove the child immediately if the animal shows signs of distress or the child shows signs of treating the animal inappropriately. The staff person will instruct children on safe procedures to follow when in close proximity to these animals (for example, not to provoke or startle animals or touch them when they are near their food).
* When animals are kept in the childcare facility, the following conditions shall be met:
  + The living quarters of animals shall be enclosed and kept clean of waste to reduce the risk of human contact with this waste
  + Animal litter boxes will not be located in areas accessible to children
  + All animal litter will be removed immediately from children's areas and discarded as required by local health authorities
  + Animal food supplies will be kept out of reach of children
  + Live animals and fowl will be prohibited from food preparation, food storage, and eating areas
  + Caregivers and children will wash their hands after handling animals, animal food or animal wastes. Follow the Handwashing guidelines posted in the classroom.

References: R 400.8310 (7), 8134 (3h) HSPPS 1302.47, Caring for Our Children 3.4.2