Animal Health and Safety Policy

At Mudy Puddles Childcare we recognise the value animals and pets can bring to the emotional needs of children and adults. Caring for animals and pets also gives children the opportunity to learn how to be gentle and responsible for others and supports their learning and development.

Nursery pets

At Muddy Puddles Childcare we have Guinea Pigs. Our safety procedures are:

• Permission slips are obtained from parents to seek written permission for their child to be involved in caring for the animal at nursery

• A full documented risk assessment is completed, including considerations for children with any allergies

• All pets are homed in an appropriate and secure area of the setting, with areas that are quiet and space away from the children, when needed

• Only staff have responsibility for cleaning out the animals. Protective equipment is used, such as gloves

• We ensure all pets have had all of their relevant vaccinations, are registered with the vet and are child-friendly

• Pets are not allowed near food, dishes, worktops or food preparation areas. Children will wash their hands with soap and water after handling animals and will be encouraged not to place their hands in their mouths while pets are being handled. Staff explain the importance of this to the children

• Children are encouraged to leave their comforters and dummies away from the animals to ensure cross-contamination is limited.

Visiting the farm animals

At Muddy Puddles we are very lucky to be surrounded by fields of farm animals, we like to visit them as much as possible. Before going on walk around the farm we check with the farmer that all animals are securely in fields and it is a safe time to visit.

• We ensure that there is an adequate number of adults to supervise the children, taking into account the needs of the children

• We explain to the children that they will not be allowed to eat or drink anything, including crisps and sweets, or place their hands in their mouths, while touring the farm because of the risk of infection and explain why

During the visit

• If children are in contact with, or feeding animals, we will warn them not to place their faces against the animals or put their hands in their own mouths afterwards, and explain why

• We will encourage children to leave comforters (e.g. soft toys and blankets) and dummies either at nursery or in a bag carried by a member of staff to ensure cross-contamination is limited

• After contact with animals and particularly before eating and drinking, we will ensure all children, staff and volunteers wash and dry their hands thoroughly. We will always explain why the children need to do this

• Manure presents a particular risk of infection and children will be warned against touching it. If they do touch it, we will ensure that they thoroughly wash and dry their hands immediately

• We will ensure footwear and clothing is as free as possible from faecal materials.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
24/01/2026	Heather Black	24/01/2027