

Appendix B

Risk Assessment for Tops Day Nurseries

Sheet No	Date of assessment 26/5/21	Activity/Process Guinea pigs			Location Tops Day Nurseries			Assessed by J Penn B Chaitoff	Review Date 5/22
SS005	Activity/Process	Hazard	Persons in Danger	Severity L,M,H	Likelihood L,M,H	Rate	Controls Comments	Result	

Risk Benefit.

The five freedoms that apply to any living creature in our care.

- 1: *Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition:* give ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
- 2: *Freedom from discomfort:* provide a suitable environment, including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- 3: *Freedom from pain, injury and disease:* ensure prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- 4: *Freedom to express normal behaviour:* provide sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
- 5: *Freedom from fear and distress:* ensure conditions avoid mental suffering.

Having pets encourages children to have shared ownership over the care and attention given to another living creature, which teaches them how to respect and treat animals and in turn this passes over to interactions with humans. It engages them to respond to something other than their own needs as the creature is dependent upon them for food, warmth, exercise, safety etc. This is often something the children may have not been exposed to thinking about before. Children often talk, with pets, or about the pets promoting communication and language skills, children will also often draw pictures, paintings of the pets in the setting. Children sometime use pets as alter egos who they can play and talk with using their imaginative skills, which can solve problems or issues they may be experiencing.

The nursery will often take the children to the pet shop to purchase supplies for the animals further enhancing their children's real life experiences and adding to the ownership and responsibility of looking after the animal.

Stroking pets helps to release positive chemicals in the brain which in turn makes the child feel relaxed and happy. However some children are fearful of pets as they might be worried about them biting, scratching or other unpredictable behaviours, observing their peers interacting with pets can help children overcome their anxieties and find strategies to cope with situations they feel less confident about.

Read Guinea Pigs in nursery [here.](#)

1	Behaviour	Loneliness	Guinea pigs	M	M	M	Guinea pigs live in close groups in the wild - always have in pairs, ensuring littermates of same sex e.g. mother/daughter. Introducing new G.P's into your group has to be done slowly. Fights will break out if they don't know each other.	A
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2	Location/ type of tank	Inadequate housing and exercise	Guinea pigs	M	L	L	<p>Guinea pigs can be kept inside or outside, which affects the type of cage or hutch. Provide a cage/hutch as large as possible – x4 up to the length of a stretched out fully grown guinea pig. If the pigs are contained for long periods or a number looked after the cage needs to be bigger. They are playful and need a large exercise area for this, they must not be kept in a cage all day. Sheltered area for sleeping/privacy needs to be provided separately for each animal.</p> <p>Plastic based cages are lightweight and easily cleanable and do not soak up urine as wood does. Metal cages with hard wire flooring are not to be used as these cause sores on the guinea pigs feet.</p> <p>If the hutch is outside provide a waterproof roof and protection from wind, rain and sun and off the ground and secure from predators. Indoors - place cage out of direct sunlight, away from draughts and in a room of constant temperature.</p> <p>Do not use straw as sharp edges could harm eyes. The best bedding is hay which also makes up the largest component of their food. Use dust free hardwood shavings or specific wood pulp, free from phenols. Avoid scented shavings as this can cause irritation or corn</p>	A	

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							cob bedding which can mould and swell after consumption. Ensure hay for bedding is free from dust and mould as they will eat this. Avoid prolonged use of alfalfa hay as this is high in calcium. Clean daily (remove soiled patches) and change bedding weekly. Never use fluffy bedding as it can get wrapped around their feed and if eaten wont dissolve.		
3	Feeding	Malnutrition	Guinea pigs	H	L	L	See Guinea Pigs in nursery care sheet. Avoid lightweight food dishes as these can be knocked over or chewed. Ceramic heavy dishes are better. Feed twice a day, must have vitamin C diet – with a mixture of meadow hay, green stuff, pellets, washed fruit and vegetables. Provide constant supply of fresh clean drinking water at suitable height with drip feed bottle with metal spout. If outside ensure this does not freeze.	A	
4	Handling	Bites, allergies	Handler	M	M	M	Try and handle daily to build relationship. Approach guinea pig from the front on its level. Pick it up using both hands, one around the hindquarters, the other around its shoulders (for a young guinea pig) or around its chest (for an adult). Sitting down with the GP is safest way for children to hold them. Guinea pigs may become upset by too much handling. Some people may be sensitive to guinea pig fur. Any child bitten, parent must	A	

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							be informed immediately after first aid treatment.	
5	Breeding	Unwanted litters	Babies	L	L	L	Un-neutered males and females must be kept apart. Neutered boars can be kept in pairs of either sex.	A
6	Health	Illnesses in pet, zoonoses – ringworm, lice	Guinea pigs, handlers	M	M	M	<p>Once purchased, to be registered at a vets with treatment for fleas and worms in place and vaccination schedule.</p> <p>If in doubt please contact your vet if ill or injured. Check eyes, nose and ears daily. Eyes should be bright and fully opened, ears warm to the touch. Guinea pigs should be checked regularly for overgrown claws and teeth (can be trimmed by a vet). Provide a gnawing block to help wear down teeth. If off food or saliva round mouth this may be a sign that teeth are too long. Too much scratching results from skin problems and is often caused by mites or lice.</p> <p>Long-haired guinea pigs in particular may suffer from the potentially fatal disease flystrike, caused by flies laying eggs in soiled fur. Make sure the guinea pigs' home is cleaned every day and bedding changed regularly. Groom guinea pigs every day, checking their fur all over for any dirt, especially under the tail.</p> <p>If a guinea pig develops bald patches on its</p>	A

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							face, this could indicate the fungal disease from the ringworm parasite. This is transferable to humans – always wash hands before and after handling. Lice are also transferable – always wash hands before and after handling. Guinea pigs can suffer from vitamin C deficiency, which causes weight loss, general weakness and swollen joints. Keep guinea pigs away from rabbits and rats – their natural flora may cause pneumonia.		
7	Holidays	Death	Guinea pigs	H	L	L	Ensure your guinea pigs are cared for over the holiday period/weekends by a competent person. As they require daily fresh water and hay, it is best practice to have a rota or specific person to take care of them over a weekend or holiday period.	A	
8	Illnesses or pre-existing conditions	Worsening of condition or injury	Person with condition	H	L	M	Staff to be aware of staff and children with underlying health conditions that could be exasperated by handling or being in close proximity to the guinea pigs. Guinea pig cage to be kept in alternative room. Staff on site with PFA training if condition needs medical aid.	U	

Key for Risk Rating: Once the likelihood and severity have been determined, the risk can be calculated below (AXB)

Key to Result:

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	Likelihood (B)				
Severity (A)	L	M	H		
Low	Low	Low	Medium	T	Trivial risk
Medium	Low	Medium	High	A	Adequately controlled
High	Medium	High	High	N	Not adequately controlled
				U	Unable to decide, further information required