

## Appendix B

### Risk Assessment for Tops Day Nurseries

Sheet No	Date of assessment 21/5/21	Activity/Process Rabbits			Location Tops Day Nurseries			Assessed by J Penn B Chaitoff	Review Date 5/22
No: SS007	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.

Rabbits are sensitive creatures and educators should **think carefully about having animals in the nursery as a classroom tool.**

Read in conjunction with Rabbit Care Sheet [here](#)

1	Location/type of cage, cleaning	Escape, sores, insufficient conditions	Rabbits	L	L	L	<b>Minimum</b> recommended cage space for one rabbit is 2x2x4ft, 1x1x2m. Wire bottomed cages should not be used as they cause sores to the rabbits feet. Provide safe exercise and play area. If indoor ensure they are unable to chew furniture, rugs, curtains and electrical	A
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							<p>cords and household plants. Can be litter trained, change litter regularly. The best type of rabbit bedding is clean, bagged straw, available from all good pet shops. (Daily fresh hay for eating). Rabbit bedding needs to be checked on a daily basis and removed if soiled. Sawdust or wood chipping is not a suitable floor covering as it holds liquid and gets stuck onto the rabbits. Particular attention needs to be paid to the accommodation during hot weather as flies may quickly lay their eggs on soiled bedding and the resulting maggots may burrow into the rabbit's fur and body cavity. This could be potentially fatal to your rabbits and is known as fly strike. Paper pellets are a safer alternative. Outside ensure this is secure and sheltered from the elements and off the ground. Provide hideaway. Ensure rabbits are not near any area that has been fertilised or pesticide applied. Provide exercise time and space. Ensure cleanliness of cage is maintained and regularly cleaned in the summer months to prevent fly strike. Wear appropriate PPE and practice effective</p>		

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							handwashing before and after cleaning.		
2	Feeding	Poor diet, illness	Rabbits	L	L	L	See care sheet. Herbivores – provide unlimited access to grass hays – timothy, brome, oat, wheat. Alfalfa hay not to be given to rabbits over 8 months, also provide commercial pellets according to weight as well as green leafy vegetables. Introduce new foods gradually. Limit fruit quantities and avoid bananas and grapes due to high sugar content. Limit quantities of foods to prevent fatal diarrhoea. Provide fresh water in a clean water bottle or heavy porcelain dish. Change water daily and wash/disinfect bowl at least weekly.	A	
3	Handling/ Grooming, checking condition etc	Bites, allergies	Handler, rabbit	M	M	M	See care sheet Brush daily to reduce hair build up and hairballs and check for fleas, parasites. Spot clean rather than bathe which causes stress. If completely soaked dry rabbit as best as possible with a towel. Check with vet regarding flea treatment as some are hazardous to rabbit health. Never pick up rabbit by their ears. Support their limbs at all times, failure to do so may result in spinal injuries. Check ears for wax or mites and clean every two weeks, swab gently never insert cotton bud into ear canal or anywhere not visible.	A	

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							Teeth should be worn slightly at the ends, if sharp or misaligned seek vet assistance. Trim nails every two weeks, never declaw or cut too short. Some people may suffer sensitivity to rabbit fur or hay. Ensure hay is dust free where possible. Any child bitten, parent must be informed immediately after first aid treatment.		
4	Breeding	Unwanted litters	Excess population	L	L	L	See care sheet .Keep males and females apart or neuter/spay.	A	
5	Health	Illnesses in pet, zoonoses – bacterial, viral, protozoal, fungal, parasitic diseases	Rabbits	M	M	M	See care sheet .Once purchased, to be registered at a vets with treatment for fleas and worms in place and vaccination schedule. Rabbits are susceptible to myxomatosis transmitted by biting insects. Ensure vaccinations are up to date (pregnant rabbits not to be vaccinated). Seek veterinary assistance should rabbit exhibit signs of illness. Some rabbits may suffer from misaligned teeth as they never stop growing this can be severely problematic – regular veterinary assistance is required once diagnosed (refer to owner guide/manual). Unlikely that zoonoses occur from domestic rabbits, however, basic hygiene should be observed, especially in those with compromised immune systems. Fur mites	A	

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							may cause slight rash – refer to GP. Thoroughly clean any bites or scratches with soap and water as soon as possible. Ensure cuts are covered when handling.	
6	Holidays	Inadequate care	Rabbits	M	M	M	See care sheet. Ensure your rabbits are cared for over the holiday period/weekends by a competent person.	A
7	Illnesses or pre-existing conditions	Worsening of condition or injury	Person with condition	H	L	M	See care sheet. Useful to have a specific first aid kit for animals in the setting that can provide immediate first aid whilst veterinary care is sought. 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 rabbit. Rabbit 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)

	Likelihood (B)		
Severity (A)	L	M	H
Low	Low	Low	Medium
Medium	Low	Medium	High
High	Medium	High	High

**Key to Result:**

T	Trivial risk
A	Adequately controlled
N	Not adequately controlled
U	Unable to decide, further information required