

RISK ASSESSMENT

Public Bottle-Feeding of Calves

Document	RA016	Activity	Public Bottle-Feeding of Calves
Site	Naylor’s Ark Soul Sanctuary	Assessment date	04/08/2026
Assessor	Sanctuary management	Review	04/08/2027 or after an incident/change
Persons at risk	Visitors, children, volunteers, staff and animals	Activity lead	Named trained sanctuary colleague

Scope. This assessment covers planned, staff-led bottle-feeding by members of the public. It does not authorise unsupervised feeding, preparation of milk by visitors, treatment of sick animals, force-feeding or entry into animal pens. The sanctuary is a rescue and does not breed on site.

Authorisation and minimum controls

1	The activity lead completes a dynamic check of the animal, feeding area, weather, visitor group and equipment before each session and may cancel at any time.
2	Only animals approved by the sanctuary manager or veterinary team may take part. A sick, scouring, distressed, weak or reluctant animal is withdrawn from public contact.
3	A trained colleague remains within arm’s reach and controls the bottle and animal. Children remain under their responsible adult’s supervision.
4	Visitors receive a spoken briefing and wash hands with soap and running water after contact. Food and drink are not consumed in the activity area.
5	Milk replacer is prepared only by trained staff to the product instructions. Bottles and teats are animal-specific, clean, inspected and disinfected after use.

Hazards and control measures

Scoring: likelihood (L) 1–5 × severity (S) 1–5. 1–4 low; 5–9 medium; 10–15 high; 16–25 very high. Any residual score above 9 requires management approval and further controls before proceeding.

Hazard / people at risk	Controls required before and during activity	Initial L×S	Residual L×S
Animal movement, head-butt, kick, crush or knock-down Public, children, staff, volunteers	Use only calm approved animals; trained handler controls position; barrier/escape route maintained; one feeder at a time; no public entry into pens; closed footwear required.	4×4 = 16	1×4 = 4
Bites, fingers trapped at teat or bottle Public, especially children	Demonstrate two-handed grip; hands stay behind teat; handler remains within arm's reach; stop if animal grabs or becomes forceful.	3×3 = 9	1×3 = 3
Zoonotic infection and faecal contamination Everyone; higher risk for pregnant, immunosuppressed, elderly or very young visitors	Exclude visibly ill/scouring animals; remove manure before session; cover cuts; no face contact; soap-and-water handwashing after contact; no eating or drinking in animal area.	4×4 = 16	1×4 = 4
Incorrect milk, temperature, concentration or volume Animal welfare	Only trained staff prepare, label and check feed to product/veterinary plan; use clean potable water; record animal and volume; public never mix or top up bottles.	3×4 = 12	1×4 = 4
Aspiration, choking, bloat or overfeeding Animal welfare	Feed in natural upright posture; never force teat; control flow and volume; stop for coughing, milk at nostrils, abdominal swelling or refusal; veterinary advice available.	3×5 = 15	1×5 = 5
Slips, trips, falls and wet surfaces Public and colleagues	Level designated area; remove hoses, buckets and manure; manage spillages immediately; suitable footwear; no running; route checked before opening.	3×3 = 9	1×3 = 3
Allergy, asthma or adverse reaction Public and colleagues	Pre-activity warning about animals, dust, milk replacer and disinfectants; avoid aerosol sprays; visitor may observe without contact; first-aid and emergency call arrangements available.	3×4 = 12	1×4 = 4
Cross-infection between animals Animals	Animal-specific or disinfected bottles/teats; no bottle sharing without cleaning; clean hands/gloves between animals; isolate sick animals; follow quarantine instructions.	3×4 = 12	1×4 = 4
Unsuitable behaviour, crowding or distress Animals and public	Small timed sessions; quiet voices; no chasing, hugging or flash photography; designated viewing line; staff may end session immediately without debate.	3×4 = 12	1×4 = 4
Poor supervision or safeguarding Children and vulnerable visitors	Named activity lead; responsible adult remains with child; staff do not take sole care of a child; clear ratios and boundaries; follow sanctuary safeguarding procedure.	3×4 = 12	1×4 = 4
Calf strength and rapid forward movement Public and handlers	Feed from outside a secure barrier or purpose-designed station; never stand directly in front of or between calf and fixed object; bottle not wrapped around hand; two trained colleagues where behaviour/history is uncertain.	4×4 = 16	1×4 = 4

Species-specific safe method

1	Confirm the individual calf, planned volume and feeding time from its care record. Check that it is bright, standing normally and showing no diarrhoea, coughing, nasal discharge or abnormal abdominal swelling.
2	Prepare and check the bottle away from the public. Confirm product, concentration, water temperature and volume against the manufacturer's instructions and the calf's veterinary or care plan.
3	Use a secure barrier or feeding station. The visitor stands on the public side with both feet stable; the trained handler positions the calf and keeps an escape route clear.
4	Demonstrate a two-handed bottle hold. Keep the calf's head and neck in a natural forward, upright position. Never raise the bottle so high that the neck is over-extended.
5	Allow the calf to take the teat voluntarily. Never force the mouth open, squeeze milk into the mouth, obstruct the nostrils or continue when the calf refuses.
6	End at the planned volume or sooner if the calf slows, pulls excessively, coughs, shows milk at the nostrils or becomes unsettled. Staff remove the bottle—visitors do not pursue the calf.
7	Record the volume offered and taken, time, calf identity and any concern. Wash and disinfect the bottle/teat, clean the activity area and supervise handwashing.

Stop the activity immediately if

STOP	The calf coughs, gasps, struggles to breathe, milk appears at the nostrils, the abdomen swells, or the calf refuses or stops sucking.
STOP	The calf becomes forceful, pushes the barrier, attempts to jump, kicks, head-butts or cannot be controlled calmly.
STOP	A visitor enters the animal side of the barrier, loses balance, ignores instructions or a child is no longer directly supervised.
STOP	The feeding plan, calf identity, bottle contents, temperature or volume cannot be confirmed.

Emergency, hygiene and incident response

Event	Required action
Animal distress or aspiration	Stop feeding; keep the animal calm and upright; alert the sanctuary manager and contact the vet if coughing, breathing difficulty or milk from nostrils persists.
Visitor injury or illness	Stop the session, give first aid within competence and call 999 for serious injury, breathing difficulty or anaphylaxis.
Bite, head-butt, crush or fall	Separate people and animal safely. Record injury and preserve the area/equipment for review.
Contamination	Remove soiled clothing where practical; wash exposed skin. Clean and disinfect the area and equipment using the approved COSHH assessment.
Reporting	Record every accident, hazard and near miss the same day. Management reviews whether RIDDOR or other reporting duties apply.

Approval and review record

Approved by	Signature	Date	Next review
			04/08/2027