

# IN-NATURE (BUSH KINDER) PROGRAM

QUALITY AREA 2 | ELAA VERSION 1.2



## PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines for Wilson Street Kindergarten to plan and conduct safe and appropriate in-nature program.



## POLICY STATEMENT

### VALUES

Wilson Street Kindergarten is committed to:

- providing opportunities through the educational program for children to explore and experience the wider environment and broader community
- ensuring that the in-nature program is accessible, affordable and contributes to children’s learning and development
- ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times, conducting risk assessments and ensuring authorisations are obtained from parents/guardians
- providing adequate supervision of all children during the in-nature program
- promoting road safety education and safe active travel for children.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the in-nature program

<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
<b>R</b> indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
1. Developing an <i>In-nature Policy</i> in consultation with the nominated supervisor, staff and parents/guardians at the service	<b>R</b>	√	√	√	√
2. Ensuring that staff, volunteers, students and others at the service are provided with a copy of the <i>In-nature Policy</i> and comply with its requirements ( <i>Regulation 171</i> )	<b>R</b>	√	√	√	√

3. Ensuring families are given all the information regarding the in-nature program prior to enrolling their child at the service	√	√			
4. Ensuring that all parents/guardians have completed, signed and dated their child's enrolment form ( <i>refer to Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i> ) including details of persons able to authorise an educator to take their child outside the service premises ( <i>Regulation 99, 160, 161</i> )	R	√	√	√	√
5. Ensuring that a child does not leave the service premises on the in-nature program unless prior written authorisation has been provided by the parent/guardian or person named in the child's enrolment record, and that the authorisation includes all details required under <i>Regulation 99, 102(4)</i> ( <i>refer to Attachment 1</i> )	R	√	√		√
6. Ensuring that parents/guardians or persons named in the enrolment record have provided written authorisation ( <i>Regulation 99</i> ) within the past 12 months where the service is to take the child on regular outings ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ), and that this authorisation is kept in the child's enrolment record ( <i>Regulation 161</i> ) ( <i>refer to Attachment 1</i> )	R	√	√	√	√
7. Ensuring that the number of children attending the in-nature program does not exceed the number for which service approval has been granted on that day	R	√	√		
8. Ensuring that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times, including during the in-nature program ( <i>Regulations 123</i> )	R	√	√		
9. Ensuring that children are adequately supervised ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) at all times ( <i>Regulation 122</i> ) ( <i>National Law: Section 165</i> )	R	√	√		√
10. Ensuring that parents/guardians, volunteers, students and all adults participating in the in-nature program are adequately supervised at all times and are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children ( <i>refer to Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy</i> )	R	√	√		
11. Ensuring that a risk assessment ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) is carried out for the in-nature program ( <i>in accordance with Regulation 101</i> ) before authorisation is sought from parents/guardians ( <i>Regulation 100</i> ), including suitability of location	R	√	√		
12. Ensuring the risk assessment ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) identifies and assesses the risks, specifies how these will be managed and/or minimised, and includes all details required by <i>Regulation 101</i>	R	√	√		
13. Developing strategies to improve children's safety in high-risk situations such as bushland, near water or near a road ( <i>refer to Supervision of Children Policy, Water Safety Policy and Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy</i> )	R	√	√		
14. Ensuring a new risk assessment is completed when circumstances change for the in-nature program	R	√	√		

15. Ensuring Child Safe Principles are included when undertaking risk assessments	R	√	√		√
16. Ensuring there are sufficient service-issued devices available during in nature programs	R	R			
17. Ensuring that only service-issued devices record images of children during in nature programs ( <i>refer to Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments</i> )	R	R			
18. Ensuring emergency plans are in place, which allow each child to be easily removed from any in-nature site in the case of an emergency and be reviewed regularly.	R	R	√		√
19. Develop procedures in response to forecast of extreme weather conditions ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) and when to cancel the in-nature program, and ensuring that parents understand this process. See attachment 2; extreme weather table.	R	R	√		√
20. Ensuring incident, injury trauma and illness procedures are followed during the in-nature program ( <i>refer to Incident, Injury Trauma and Illness Policy</i> )	R	√	√		√
21. Ensuring that staff and volunteers comply with the service's <i>Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy</i>	R	√	√	√	√
22. Encouraging parents/guardians to comply with the service's <i>Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy and Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments</i>	R	√	√	√	√
23. Providing road safety education as part of the curriculum		√	√		
24. Ensuring that adequate, developmentally and age-appropriate toilet, handwashing and drying facilities are provided for use by the children. If children who wear nappies are present, ensuring that adequate and appropriate hygienic facilities are available for nappy changing.	R	√			
25. Ensuring that the in-nature program is based on an approved learning framework, the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child ( <i>refer to Curriculum Development Policy</i> )		√	√		
26. Ensuring that there is a clear purpose and educational value for the in-nature program, and that this is communicated to parents/guardians		√	√		
27. Discussing the aims and objectives of the in-nature program, and items of special interest, with children prior to undertaking the activity		√	√		
28. Involving children in consultation and decision-making processes		√	√		√
29. Considering the financial ability of families before deciding on the in-nature program that would require an additional charge. Events that can be planned ahead of time should be included as an expenditure item in the service's budget	√	√	√		

and, as a result, will not incur additional charges ( <i>refer to Fees Policy</i> )					
30. Ensuring that proposed in-nature program are inclusive of all children regardless of their abilities, additional needs or medical conditions ( <i>refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy, Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy, Asthma Policy, Anaphylaxis Policy, Diabetes Policy and Epilepsy Policy</i> )	R	√	√		
31. Developing procedures if families are required to deliver to and/or collect from the in-nature program ( <i>Refer to Delivery and Collection of Children Policy</i> )	R	√			
32. Ensuring strategies are in place to provide an accurate attendance record ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) for children attending the in-nature program, and for children remaining at the service while the in-nature program is happening	R	√			
33. Ensuring strategies are in place to ensure that there is an accurate list of all adults participating in the in-nature program, including parents/guardians, volunteers and students, with contact details for each individual	R	√	√		
34. Ensuring that each child's personal medication and current medical management plan is taken on the in-nature program ( <i>refer to Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy, Asthma Policy, Anaphylaxis Policy, Diabetes Policy and Epilepsy Policy</i> )	R	√	√	√	√
35. Understanding that, if they participate in an excursion or service event as a volunteer, they will be always under the immediate supervision of an ECT/educator or the approved provider				√	√
36. If participating in the in-nature program, informing an educator immediately if a child appears to be missing from the group				√	√
37. Taking a portable first aid kit (including required medication for dealing with medical conditions) on the in-nature program ( <i>Regulation 89</i> )	R	√	√		√
38. Ensuring the service issued mobile phone has the emergency contact details for each child taken on the in-nature program for notification in the event of an incident, injury, trauma or illness ( <i>Regulation 98</i> )	R	√	√		
39. Ensuring sunscreen and hats (if required) is taken on the in-nature program and is available as required and that location provides adequate shade ( <i>refer to Sun Protection Policy</i> )	R	√	√		√
40. Ensuring children always have access to safe drinking water and are offered food and beverages appropriate to their needs whilst on the in-nature program	R	√	√		√
41. Informing parents/guardians of items required by children for the in-nature program event e.g., snack/lunch, sunscreen, coat etc	√	√	√		

42. Displaying a notice at the service indicating that children are on the in-nature program, and including the location of the program and expected time of return to the service	√	√	√		
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## BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

### BACKGROUND

In-nature programs are outdoor educational sessions for children held in various natural settings such as, metropolitan park, regional parks, local bushland, or local beaches.

Within in-nature programs, children learn through play with natural materials in an outdoor environment, creating a fun and engaging classroom in nature. Experts in child development emphasise the significance of outdoor play for children's learning and wellbeing. It supports their physical and mental growth and teaches them to manage risks. This educational approach aligns with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and the National Quality Framework (NQF)

When planning for in-nature programs, it is important to ensure that they are inclusive of all members of the service community. Consideration must be given to any extra costs involved and the ability of families to pay these costs. Consideration must also be given to ensuring that all children can attend regardless of their abilities, additional needs or medical conditions (*refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy, Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy, Asthma Management Policy, Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions Policy, Diabetes Policy and Epilepsy and Seizure Policy*). Clear procedures must be developed and followed, and these should be communicated to parents/guardians.

A risk assessment must be conducted for the in-nature program to identify potential risks to children's health, safety, or wellbeing before seeking permission from parents or guardians (*Regulations 100, 101*). The risk assessment must outline each risk and detail how it will be managed or minimised (*Regulation 101*). Written authorisation from a parent/guardian, or an individual listed in the child's enrolment record must be obtained prior to taking the child off the service premises. For specific information to be included in the written authorisation, *refer to Attachment 1*.

Early childhood road safety education seeks to minimise the risk of serious injury and death from road accidents, while also preparing children to become safe and independent road and transport users in the future. Integrating road safety education into outdoor programs, such as in-nature programs, provides a comprehensive approach to keeping children safe around traffic and in road environments. Children develop effective traffic skills most successfully when they practice in real-world settings, such as using crossings and traffic lights.

### LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- *National Quality Standard*, including Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice and Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)

## DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g., Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

**Adequate supervision:** (In relation to this policy) supervision entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

**Attendance Record:** Kept by the service to record details of each child attending the service including name, time of arrival and departure, signature of person delivering and collecting the child or of the nominated supervisor or educator ([Regulation 158\(1\)](#)).

**Extreme Weather:** weather that threatens the immediate or long-term safety of individuals, as a result of rain, lightning, wind or heat -[Bureau of Meteorology's Severe weather knowledge centre](#)

**Risk assessment:** (In the context of this policy) a risk assessment must identify and assess any hazard that poses a risk to a child's health, safety and/or wellbeing while on an excursion, and specify how these risks will be managed and/or minimised ([Regulation 101](#)). Risk assessments must consider:

- the proposed route and location of the in-nature program
- any water hazards ([refer to Water Safety Policy](#))
- any risks associated with water-based activities ([refer to Water Safety Policy](#))
- if the excursion involves transporting children—
  - the means of transport; and
  - any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported; and
  - the process for entering and exiting—
    - the education and care service premises; and
    - the pick-up location or destination (as required); and
  - procedures for embarking and disembarking the means of transport, including how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking; and
- the number of adults and children involved in the excursion; and
- given the risks posed by the in-nature program, the number of educators or other responsible adults that is appropriate to provide supervision and whether any adults with specialised skills are required (example: Specialised skills could include life-saving skills)
- the proposed activities, and the impact of this on children with varying levels of ability, additional needs or medical conditions
- the proposed duration of the in-nature program, and the impact of this on children with varying levels of ability, additional needs or medical conditions
- any items/information that should be taken on the in-nature program e.g., first aid kit, emergency contact details for children, medication for children with known medical conditions (such as asthma, anaphylaxis and diabetes) and a mobile phone.

A sample Excursion Risk Management Plan is provided on the ACECQA website at: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au) (search Sample forms and templates)

**Regular outing:** (In relation this policy) a walk, drive or trip to/from a location that the service visits regularly as part of its educational program, and where the circumstances covered by the risk assessment are the same on each trip. If an excursion is a regular outing, an authorisation from parents/guardians is only required to be obtained once every 12 months. A new authorisation is required if there is any change to the circumstances of the regular outing.

**Supervision:** refer to adequate supervision in *Definitions* above.

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## SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES



### SOURCES

- ACECQA Information Sheet: [The how and why of in-nature play](#)
- ACECQA: [Risk Assessment and Management Tool](#)
- Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- CELA Blog – [A bush yarn](#)
- Child Health Promotion Research Centre & Edith Cowan University (2012) National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education: <https://childroadsafety.org.au/assets/Research/National-Practices-for-EC-RSE.pdf>
- Department of Education: [Bush Kinders](#)
- ELAA's Road Safety Education program [www.childroadsafety.org.au](http://www.childroadsafety.org.au)
- Guide to the National Quality Standard, ACECQA: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- Parks Victoria – [Bush Kinder Handbook](#)
- VicRoads: [www.vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au)
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)
- [Victorian Educators Outdoor Pedagogy Portal](#)

### RELATED POLICIES

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- Administration of First Aid
- Administration of Medication
- Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions
- Asthma Management
- Code of Conduct
- Educational Program
- Dealing with Medical Conditions
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Diabetes
- Emergency and Evacuation
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Epilepsy and Seizures
- Fees
- Food Safety
- Hygiene
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Inclusion and Equity
- Interactions with Children
- Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Participation of Volunteers and Students
- Privacy and Confidentiality

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- Road Safety Education and Safe Transport
- Safe Use of Digital Technology and Online Environments
- Sun Protection
- Supervision of Children
- Water Safety

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## EVALUATION



In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).



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## ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Developing a regular outing authorisation form
- Attachment 2: Extreme weather table
- Attachment 3: Dog Awareness Policy
- Attachment 4: Snake & Spider Awareness Policy



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## AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Wilson Street Kindergarten on 20/02/2026

**REVIEW DATE:** 20/02/2029

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## ATTACHMENT 1. DEVELOPING A REGULAR OUTING AUTHORISATION FORM

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Regulation 102 (4))* specify that written authorisations for excursions, given by a parent/guardian or person authorised on the child's enrolment record, must include the following details:

- the child's name
- the reason the child is to be taken outside the service premises
- a description of when the child is to be taken on the regular outings
- a description of the proposed location of the in-nature program
- if the excursion involves transporting children—
  - (i) the means of transport; and
  - (ii) any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported
- proposed activities to be undertaken as part of the in-nature program
- the period of time that the child will be away from the service premises
- the anticipated number of children attending the excursion
- the anticipated ratio of educators to children attending the excursion
- the anticipated number of staff members, and any other adults who will accompany and supervise children on the excursion
- that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the service.

**Note:** regular outing authorisation is only required to be obtained once in a 12 month period.

The authorisation form should require parents/guardians to include contact details for two people and for the child's medical practitioner in the event that the child experiences an incident, injury, trauma or illness while on the excursion.

The form must be signed and dated by the parent/guardian or a person authorised on the child's enrolment form.

Services should also include information about:

- additional costs involved, if any, and
- whether parents/guardians/siblings are able to participate in the excursion and, if so, details of the supervision requirements for additional family members.

## ATTACHMENT 2. EXTREME WEATHER TABLE

### Procedures

#### In the event of forecast extreme or unsuitable weather

In the case of forecast extreme weather, Wilson Street Kindergarten will make the decision to relocate the Bush Kinder program to home kinder (11 Wilson Street, Brighton) for the session effected.

WEATHER CONDITION	EXTREME WEATHER DETERMINENT CAUSING RELOCATION
Forecast Temperature	35°C or greater <b>and/or</b> kindergarten teacher decided that it would be appropriate to cancel bush kinder.  Note: There is no pre-set minimum temperature. Appropriate clothing should be worn on very cold days (Refer Protective Clothing Policy)
Forecast Wind Speed	In excess of 45km per hour <b>and</b> kindergarten teacher decides that it would be appropriate to cancel bush kinder, based on a final assessment at the site
Forecast of Electrical Storm Activity	Thunder / Electrical storms forecast
Flooding of Landcox park around Bush Kinder site	On inspection of the area by the teacher and if no suitable alternative can be found within the Landcox Park area
BOM weather warnings of extreme storm conditions and/or excessive rainfall	On warning issued by the Bureau of meteorology

#### Staff are responsible for:

- Monitoring the weather forecast via Bureau of Meteorology website (or via mobile phone app) the day prior to the Bush Kinder session and deciding to cancel/re-locate based on the weather forecast.
- Providing notice to parent/ guardians and staff of the status of the Bush Kinder session/s as follows:
  - By Audiri post
  - Note that a bush kinder session may be cancelled at **short** notice or any other time by an Audiri post.

#### In the event of weather becoming extreme during a session

In addition to the responsibilities listed above, staff are responsible for:

- Undertaking the following actions in each of the weather conditions listed in the table below;

WEATHER CONDITION	STAFF ACTIONS
Heat – Risks include sunburn, heat stress, heat stroke, dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor children for heat exhaustion/heat stroke. (see Attachment 1 for symptoms and treatments)</li> <li>Offer water for hydration at regular intervals.</li> <li>Establish activities in shaded areas and encourage children to play in the shade.</li> <li>Ensure application of sunscreen every two hours.</li> <li>Ensure appropriate protective clothing including hats.</li> </ul>

Rain/Hail/Cold – Risks include child getting wet (and onset of hypothermia), injury from hailstones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor children for wet clothing and change if necessary.</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate clothing is worn including waterproof clothes, hats, coats, gloves scarves etc.</li> <li>• Seek shelter in heavy rain or in hail.</li> </ul>
Electrical Storm activity / Lightening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move children away from trees.</li> <li>• Seek shelter in the toilet block.</li> <li>• See attachment 2 for lightening safety fact sheet.</li> </ul>
High Winds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure structures and dangerous items are secure.</li> <li>• Move children away from trees.</li> <li>• Seek shelter in public toilet area if necessary.</li> <li>• If children are being moved follow the relocating to safe position instructions below.</li> </ul>

- In the event of illness or injury during a session as a result of weather conditions, the Illness policy and Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness policy must be followed.

Parents are responsible for:

- Collecting their child at any time during the session if they are not comfortable with the weather conditions.

If the weather during a Bush Kinder session becomes extreme enough for the session to be cancelled and parents notified it will not be re-located back to home kinder.

#### Procedures for Relocating to a Safe Position

In the event of extreme weather where shelter is required it will be in the public toilet area.

If conditions necessitate evacuation from Landcox Park, follow procedures in the Bush Kinder Emergency Evacuation Risk Assessment.

If the Bush Kinder group is required to relocate to a safe position in response to the weather conditions, the following procedures are to be followed by staff (with the assistance of volunteers):

- Keep children calm.
- Ensure sign-in sheet is in the teacher’s backpack along with other necessary items such as medication.
- Count / check off against the sign in sheet to ensure all children are accounted for.
- Leave Bush Kinder gear at the site, with the exception of the teacher’s backpack – all other gear can be collected later.
- En route to new location (see below for appropriate locations), calmly walk children, keep group close together and ensure no child deviates from the group.
- Teachers/adult volunteers to be positioned at the front and back of the group, and flanking the group where possible.
- Notify emergency services if required.
- On arrival at safe assembly point, conduct a full count/roll call to ensure all children are accounted for.
- Wait for the extreme weather to pass and when it does, resume normal activities, following same relocation procedures to return to the Bush Kinder site.
- If the weather does not look like it will pass soon, an Audiri post and/ or message to the class rep for the whats app group will be sent.

## ATTACHMENT 3. DOG AWARENESS POLICY



### PURPOSE

- Procedures for dealing with dogs off leads that may enter the Bush Kinder space or area where an excursion is being held.
- Guidelines for dealing with an angry or threatening dog and/or a dog in attack mode.
- The appropriate medical response to dog bites.
- A framework for the appropriate education and training of children, staff, parents, and children on how to live safely with dogs.



### POLICY STATEMENT

#### VALUES

Wilson Street Kindergarten is committed to:

- the safety, health and wellbeing of the children at Bush Kinder.
- Being respectful of the community space that the bush kinder or excursion site offers, including an awareness of dogs being walked off leads in the area.
- Facilitating appropriate communication and education to staff and parents to minimise the risk of injury of a dog bite to children and staff during bush kinder.

#### SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, nominated supervisor, certified supervisor, educators, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and students on placement working at Wilson Street Kindergarten

### PROCEDURES

#### GENERAL

The Committee is responsible for:

- Running an education session for each of the kinder groups, parents and staff. Particular attention in the session is given to recognising the warning signs given by dogs, the correct way to approach a dog and what to do if approached by an aggressive dog.
- Supplying a First Aid Kit on site at Bush Kinder or on an excursion to administer first aid in response to dog bites or for any other purpose.
- Encouraging parents, through this policy, to practice safe dog behaviours at home and to teach children on an ongoing basis how to behave around dogs to minimise risk of dog bites.
- Ensuring staff are appropriately educated on procedures in the event of an aggressive or threatening dog at the bush kinder site and in the event of a dog attack.
- Following all procedures as set out in the Incident, Illness, Trauma & Illness Policy (including notice of notifiable incidents, appropriate record keeping in the event of an incident, maintain first aid kit etc).

Staff are responsible for:

- Continually educating children on the appropriate behaviours around dogs, including recognising warning signs, the correct way to approach a dog, and what to do if approached by an aggressive dog.
- Ensure Bush Kinder Base is set in a 'dogs on leash' area of the park.
- Administering first aid in the event of a dog attack.
- Follow procedures in the event of a dog in attack mode.
- Ensuring incidents are reported in log.

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- Ensuring children wash hands if they touch a dog.

Carrying out the following specific procedures in the event of one of the following incidents occurring:

- a. If a dog off a lead enters the Bush Kinder or Excursion site
  - Remind children to stand still and not to touch or encourage the dog or make any sudden movements.
  - Locate the owner if possible and encourage the owner to move the dog away the bush kinder site and put the dog on a lead.
- b. If an aggressive and threatening dog enters the Bush Kinder or Excursion Site
  - Remind children to keep quiet and still, look down (no eye-contact with dog), and put arms by sides with hands in fists with thumbs on the inside.
  - Encourage children to keep calm and not run.
  - Wait until the dog leaves the area before resuming activities.
  - Locate the owner if possible and encourage the owner to put the dog on a lead and move the dog away from the site.
- c. If a dog attacks a child
  - Staff will follow current first aid practice. This practice will be informed by up to date Level 2 First Aid Training.
  - Staff are to follow procedures as set out in Incident, Illness, Trauma & Illness Policy, including contacting parent, calling ambulance, logging incidents etc.

Parents are responsible for:

- Practising safe dog behaviours at home and outside of the kinder.
- Teaching children on an ongoing basis how to behave around dogs to minimise risk of dog bites.
- If possible, attending the education session as provided by the committee for children, parents and staff.
- Collecting their child as soon as possible when notified of an incident or medical emergency involving their child (such as a dog bite).
- Reading and being familiar with the policy.
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee.

Safe Behaviour around dogs: The following rules are recommended by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries 'Living Safely with Dogs' program and reinforced by the Victorian Government's Better Health Channel Website:

- Always supervise children and dogs.
- If you are unable to supervise even for a short time, separate children from dogs.
- Never approach a strange dog.
- When approaching dogs, ALWAYS:
  - ASK the permission of the owner.
  - Always let the dog smell the back of your hand first (Demonstrate to the child how to tuck the thumb in and make a fist don't put their hand right up to the nose of the dog just enough for the dog to smell).
  - Step to the side of the dog and pat gently and calmly from the collar to the tail.
  - Do not pat a dog on its head.

#### EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the Authorised Provider (committee) will:

Seek feedback regarding this policy and its implementation with parents of children participating in the Bush Kinder program. This can be facilitated through discussions and the annual parent survey.

Ask staff to share their experiences and observations in relation to the effectiveness of this policy.

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Regularly review the policy and centre practices to ensure they are compliant with any new legislation, research or best practice procedures.



## BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Wilson Street Kindergarten's Bush Kinder program is conducted in a community park which requires dogs to be walked on leads. Regular walks and excursions into the community and public spaces is also part of the curriculum. It is important that children, staff and parents are aware of the recommended behaviour around dogs and that appropriate communication and training is undertaken to minimise the risk of dog attack injury.

The National Law and National Regulations do not specify a minimum age limit for an authorised nominee. Each service will need to determine if a person under the age of 18 is able to be an authorised nominee and, if so, what constitutes the minimum acceptable age at that service.

## LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)



## SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### SOURCES

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA): [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- Department of Education and Training (DET) Licensed Children's Services, phone 1300 307 415 or email [licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au)
- Better Health Channel Website: Child Safety 'Children & Animals', Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries 'Living Safely with Dogs' Education Program

### RELATED POLICIES

- Excursion & Regular Outing Policy
- Bush Kinder Delivery & Collection of Children Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Extreme Weather Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Emergency Evacuation (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Snake and Spider Awareness Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Protective Clothing Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Occupational Health & Safety Policy
- Incident, Illness, Trauma & Illness Policy
- Clothing Policy

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- Sun Protection Policy

### EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:



- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).

## ATTACHMENT 4. SNAKE & SPIDER AWARENESS POLICY

### Purpose

This policy aims to clearly define:

- The risk of snakes and spiders in the Bush Kinder space.
- Procedures for preventing spider or snake bite.
- The appropriate medical response to snake bites and spider bites.
- A framework for the appropriate education and training of children, staff, parents and children on minimising the risks.

### Policy Statement

#### 1. Values

Wilson Street Kindergarten is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for children, staff and volunteers participating in the Bush Kinder program.
- Being respectful of wildlife in and around the Bush Kinder space, including an awareness of the presence of snakes in the area in the warmer months and of spiders throughout the year.
- Facilitating appropriate communication and education to staff, parents and children to minimise the risk of injury of a snake or spider bite during Bush Kinder sessions.

#### 2. Scope

This policy applies to children, parents, staff, committee members, authorised persons, volunteers and students on placement working at Wilson Street Kindergarten.

#### 3. Background and legislation

Wilson Street Kindergarten's Bush Kinder program is conducted in parkland. Spiders are common in the area particularly in trees and under logs. Unprovoked, snakes rarely attack humans and are generally shy, timid animals that will avoid conflict if given the opportunity. It is recommended that particular care be taken in warm weather, near long grass or hollow logs, near water or near rocks in sunny positions. Snakes are protected under the *Wildlife Act 1975*, and should not be harmed or killed. Bites can occur if people try to kill snakes.

Relevant legislation may include but is not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Education and Care Services National Law 2010
- National Quality Standard
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007
- Wildlife Act 1975

#### 4. Definitions

Australian Venom Research Unit (AVRU) is an internationally recognised interdisciplinary research unit focused on the problem of venomous injury in Australia and the Asia-Pacific. Located within Melbourne University, the Australian Venom Research Unit aims to provide world-class expertise on the problem of Australia's venomous creatures, their toxins and the care of the envenomed patient.

Pressure Immobilisation Bandage (also known as Compression Bandage): Bandage used for the purpose of applying pressure to the site of a wound such as a snakebite and to the affected limb. Refer definition below of Pressure Immobilisation Bandaging.

Pressure Immobilisation Bandaging: The principle of pressure-immobilisation bandaging as a first aid measure is to prevent the spread of toxins through the body. This is done by applying enough pressure to compress the lymph vessels, and by preventing movement of the affected limb. Correct application of the technique can buy valuable time to get the patient to medical assistance. [Refer to Attachment 1 for correct application of pressure immobilisation technique.

Victorian Poisons Information Centre (VPIC): Located at the Austin Hospital, the role of the VPIC is to provide the people of Victoria with a timely, safe information service in poisonings and suspected poisonings. For members of the public this includes telephone assessment, advice on first aid, with or without referral to a doctor or hospital. Information is given to health professionals about formulations of products and management of poisoned patients.

#### 5. Sources and related centre policies

Bites & Stings web resource, Victorian Poisons Information Centre, Austin Health ([www.austin.org.au](http://www.austin.org.au))

*Australian Venom Research Institute (University of Melbourne)* [www.avru.org](http://www.avru.org)

Bushwalking Victoria Snakebite web resource (<http://www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au>)

#### General

- Staff are responsible for:
  - Practising and educating children on spider and snake bite prevention behaviours while at Bush Kinder, without fostering an unnatural fear or paranoia of spiders or snakes. This includes practising and highlighting to children the following key points:

*Snake Bite Prevention Behaviours (Source: Victorian Poisons Information Centre, Austin Health).*

- Leave spiders and snakes alone.
- Wear adequate clothing and shoes (not sandals/thongs) at bush kinder.
- Never put hands in hollow logs or thick grass without prior inspection.
- When stepping over logs, carefully inspect the ground on the other side.
- Ensure children are reminded on a regular basis that if they encounter a snake, to move away quietly and report the sighting immediately to a teacher or if they encounter a spider to not touch it and report the sighting to a teacher.
- In the event that a snake is encountered at Bush Kinder, calmly moving children away from the snake. [Staff must not attempt to touch or harm the snake].

- Administering first aid in the event of a snake bite.

6.

*First aid for snakebite (Source: Victorian Poisons Information Centre, Austin Health, and Australian Venom Research Institute, Melbourne University))*

- Stay calm and call for help. Have someone phone an ambulance. If unable to phone, send someone for help.
- Reassure the patient and encourage them to remain calm and still. Do not move the patient.
- Do not attempt to catch or kill the snake
- DO NOT WASH the bite. Traces of venom that are left on the skin can be used to identify the snake, and therefore the type of anti-venom that should be used if required.
- Venom is injected deeply so there is no benefit in cutting or sucking the bite. A tourniquet is not an effective way to restrict venom movement.
- The most effective first aid for snakebite is the pressure-immobilisation technique. (Refer to Attachment 1 for instructions on the application of this technique). The principle is to minimise the movement of the venom around the body until the victim is in a hospital by applying a firm bandage (or suitable alternative) to the bitten area and limb, and to immobilise the victim. When applied properly, this method can trap the venom in the bitten area for many hours. The victim might not suffer any effects of the venom until the compression is released, which is done in hospital where anti-venom can be administered if required.

7.

- Administering first aid in the event of a spider bite

*First Aid for spider bite (Source: Simply First Aid reference guide, Allens Training)*

- The appropriate first aid for spider bite depends on the type of spider responsible. All spiders should be treated symptomatically. Spider bite types:
  - Redback Spider – Rarely serious for an adult but may be serious for a child. The venom is slow to act so serious illness is unlikely.
  - White-tailed Spider –
    - Most common – mild reaction with itching and skin discolouration.
    - Usually resolves after a few weeks. Sometimes – severe inflammation.
    - Rarely – Ulcers.
  - Other Spiders – If serious symptoms or signs develop from any spider bite, take the casualty to hospital.
- If any or all of the following occur:
  - Intense local pain which increases and spreads
  - Skin is hot, red, swollen at bite site

- Nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain
  - Profuse sweating, especially at the bite site
  - Swollen glands in armpits or groin
  - Rarely – blisters or ulcers
- Call 000 if the casualty is a young child, for severe pain, collapse, not sure of the spider or condition worsens.
  - Apply Ice packs/cold compress to the bite site to help relieve pain. Ice should not be applied for any more than 20 minutes. If the bush kinder first aid kit doesn't contain cold compress material then ice can be obtained from the café across the road.

Staff are to follow procedures as set out in the Incident, Illness, Trauma & Illness Policy, including contacting parent, calling ambulance etc.

8.

Parents are responsible for:

- Reading and being familiar with the policy.
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee.

Pressure Immobilisation Technique (Detailed instructions with diagram on application of this technique in the event of a snake bite). *Source: Australian Venom Research Institute (Melbourne University)*

### Pressure Immobilisation Bandaging Fact Sheet

Source: Australian Venom Research Unit, University of Melbourne ([www.avru.org](http://www.avru.org))

The principle of pressure-immobilisation bandaging as a first aid measure is to prevent the spread of toxins through the body. This is done by applying enough pressure to compress the lymph vessels, and by preventing movement of the affected limb. Correct application of the technique can buy valuable time to get the patient to medical assistance.

#### First Aid for Bites to the Lower Limb



**1** As soon as possible, apply a broad pressure bandage from below the bite site, upward on the affected limb (starting at the fingers or toes, bandaging upward as far as possible). Leave the tips of the fingers or toes unbandaged to allow the victim's circulation to be checked. Do not remove pants or trousers, simply bandage over the top of the clothing.



**2** Bandage firmly as for a sprained ankle, but not so tight that circulation is prevented. Continue to bandage upward from the lower portion of the bitten limb.



**3** Apply the bandage as far up the limb as possible to compress the lymphatic vessels.



**4** It is vital to now apply a splint. Bind a stick or suitable rigid item over the initial bandage to splint the limb. Secure the splint to the bandaged limb by using another bandage, (if another bandage is not available, use clothing strips or similar to bind). It is very important to keep the bitten limb still.



**5** Bind the splint firmly, to as much of the limb as possible, to prevent muscle, limb and joint movement. This will help restrict venom movement. Seek urgent medical assistance now that first aid has been applied.

#### First Aid for Bites on the Hand or Forearm



**1** As soon as possible, apply a broad pressure bandage from the fingers of the affected arm, bandaging upward as far as possible. Bandage the arm with the elbow in a bent position, to ensure the victim is comfortable with their arm in a sling. Leave the tips of the fingers unbandaged to allow the victim's circulation to be checked.

**2** Bind a splint along the forearm.