

BUSH KINDER: DOG AWARENESS

QUALITY AREA 2



Working in partnership with Cancer Council Victoria, ELAA has aligned this policy to the key policies and guidelines of the Healthy Early Childhood Services Achievement Program.

This policy, Bush Kinder Dog Awareness, is a special circumstance policy which augments the main Ferguson Park Preschool Supervision of Children Policy and should be read in conjunction with this policy.



PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for Ferguson Park Preschool to:

- dealing with dogs off leads that may enter the Bush Kinder space
- dealing with an angry or threatening dog and/or a dog in attack mode
- utilising the appropriate medical response to dog bites
- providing the framework for the appropriate education and training of children, staff, parents and children on how to live safely with dogs.



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Ferguson Park Preschool is committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy environment for children and staff participating in the Bush Kinder program
- being respectful of the community space that the bush kinder site offers, including an awareness of dogs being walked off leads in the area
- providing appropriate communication and education to staff, parents and guardians to minimise the risk of injury of a dog bite to children and staff during bush kinder.
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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 programs and activities of Ferguson Park Preschool Bush Kinder program.



RESPONSIBILITIES	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
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Running a 'Living Safely with Dogs'/'Responsible Pet Owners' education session (online or in person due to availability) for each four year old kinder group, and staff ideally in term 1 each year. 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	R				
Supplying a First Aid Kit on site at Bush Kinder to administer first aid in response to dog bites or for any other purpose	R				
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	R				
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	R	✓			
Following all procedures as set out in the <i>Administration of First Aid Policy</i> and the <i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy</i> (including notice of notifiable incidents, appropriate record keeping in the event of an incident, maintain first aid kit etc.)	R	✓	✓	✓	✓
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		✓	✓		
Ensuring Bush Kinder Signage is clearly visible when operating in paddock/parkland		✓	✓		
Remaining vigilant concerning the presence of dogs and other animals during Bush Kinder sessions		✓	✓	✓	✓
Requesting other Parkland users not to interfere/interact with children in the Bush Kinder program		✓	✓	✓	
Administering first aid in the event of a dog attack		✓	✓		
Follow procedures in the event of a dog in attack mode		✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensuring incidents and near misses are reported in incident book and near miss register		✓	✓		
Carrying out the following specific procedures in the event of one of the following incidents occurring (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>).		✓	✓	✓	✓



Staff are to follow procedures as set out in <i>Administration of First Aid Policy</i> and the <i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy</i> including contacting parent/guardian, calling ambulance etc.		✓	✓		
Practising safe dog behaviours at home and outside of the kindergarten				✓	
Teaching children on an ongoing basis how to behave around dogs to minimise risk of dog bites				✓	
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 this policy			✓	✓	✓
Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee				✓	



PROCEDURES

- Implementing and maintaining a Dog Awareness Policy which provides clarity to parents and staff as to the appropriate behaviour and actions around dogs on site of Bush Kinder to ensure their safety and wellbeing.



BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

Ferguson Park preschool's Bush Kinder program is conducted in community parkland which allows dogs to be walked off leads in designated areas. 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.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are 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

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

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: 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.

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
 - Pat dogs gently and calmly from the collar to the tail
 - Do not pat a dog on its head
- Stand still if a dog approaches (don't make direct eye contact, hands in fists by your side with thumbs on the inside)
- Never intervene between dogs that are fighting
- Never disturb a dog that is eating or sleeping

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES



SOURCES

- Better Health Channel Website: Child Safety 'Children & Animals': betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/animals-and-child-safety
- Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industry's 'Living Safely With Dogs' and Responsible Pet Ownership education Programs: agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/community-and-education/responsible-pet-ownership-for-children
- We Are Family program: wearefamily.vic.gov.au/
- Pet town learning tool: pettown.vic.gov.au/

RELATED POLICIES

- Administration of First Aid
- Excursions and Service Events
- Hygiene
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Occupational Health & Safety
- Participation of Volunteers and Students
- Bush Kinder: Supervision

EVALUATION



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

- 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 \(2\)](#))
- where deemed appropriate, encourage feedback regarding this policy and its implementation with parents/guardians of children participating in the Bush Kinder program
- ask staff to share their experiences and observations in relation to the effectiveness of this policy
- regularly review the policy and centre practices to ensure they are compliant with any new legislation, research or best practice procedures.



ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Procedures to follow if dog enters the Bush Kinder Site
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AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Ferguson Park Preschool on **05/06/2024**.

REVIEW DATE: 05/06/2025.



ATTACHMENT 1. PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW IF DOG ENTERS THE BUSH KINDER SITE

1. If a dog off a lead enters the Bush Kinder site:
 - Educators are to announce, “dog off lead” and model/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 from the bush kinder site
 - Educators let children know that the dog has gone and they can resume play.
2. If an aggressive and threatening dog enters the Bush Kinder 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
 - if a child gets knocked over roll into a ball and keep still
 - 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 Bush Kinder site
 - if staff are concerned please note breed of dog and any identifying details, e.g. red collar and alert Shire of Nillumbik Council.

3. If a dog attacks a child:

The following procedures in response to a dog bite are listed on the Victorian Government’s Better Health Channel Website and are to be discussed at the commencement of each year:

- calm the child
- if the skin has been broken, wash the area under cold running water if available
- Cover the bite with a clean dressing
- notify parents of the need to take the child to the doctor, as a tetanus booster and antibiotics may be necessary
- if a piece of flesh has been bitten off, call an ambulance
- control the bleeding by applying firm pressure to the wound using a sterile dressing or clean cloth until the ambulance arrives
- if the child is pale or drowsy, lie them down and raise their legs on a pillow.

4. How to Report a Dog Attack

To report an attack on a person, animal or pet you can call:

- your local Council(Shire of Nillumbik) 9433 3111 or
- the Dangerous Dogs Hotline on 136 186.

The Dangerous Dogs Hotline gives the community an additional way of reporting dangerous dogs.

The hotline 136 186 operates 8am to 6pm from Monday to Friday. You will be connected to our customer service centre. When prompted, select option 1 — to report an animal offence including a dangerous dog.

All reports of dangerous dogs are recorded and information is forwarded to the relevant local council.

5. Investigation and follow up

It is the Victorian Government's expectation that all dangerous dog reports received by local councils will be promptly investigated. Caller information will be provided to councils where hotline operators get consent to do so. If a caller's details are provided, it is expected local councils will follow up with the residents to let them know the outcome.

