

Purpose

This policy aims to clearly define:

- Procedures for dealing with dogs off lead that may enter the Bush Kinder space
- 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

1. Values

Helen Paul Kindergarten 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 lead 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.

2. Scope

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

3. Background and legislation

Helen Paul Kindergarten's Bush Kinder program is conducted in community parkland which allows dogs to be walked off lead 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.

Relevant legislation includes but is not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *Education and Care Services National Law 2010*
- National Quality Standards, including Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety and Quality Area 3 – Physical environment
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007

4. Definitions

Safe behaviour around dogs: The following extract is taken from the [Victorian Government's Better Health Channel Website](#):

Any dog can and might bite a child.

Some things you can do to avoid incidents and reduce the risk of dog bites to children include:

- Supervise. Children always need constant, close supervision when near dogs, especially during play when children must be gentle with dogs.
- Teach children to leave a dog alone when it is sleeping or eating.
- Children must leave a dog alone when it lifts its lips, growls, backs away, raises the hair on its back or stares at you.
- Teach children not to approach an unfamiliar dog, even if it looks friendly. Always have your child ask you and the dog owner if they want to pat a dog.
- Pat dogs gently and calmly.
- If a child is approached by an unfamiliar dog, teach the child to stand completely still, arms by their sides, hands in a fist, and not to run or scream, or make eye contact with the dog.
- Train the dog to obey commands such as sit, stay, drop and come.
- Never intervene between dogs that are fighting.

5. Sources and related policies

[Better Health Channel Website: Child Safety 'Children & Animals'](#)

Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries 'Living Safely With Dogs' Education Program

Kindergarten policies

- Bush Kinder Delivery & Collection of Children Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Extreme Weather Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Identification and Visibility Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Emergency Evacuation Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Snake Awareness Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Protective Clothing Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Policy (including First Aid)
- Supervision of Children Policy
- Excursion & Service Events Policy
- Sun Protection Policy
- Water Safety Policy
- Occupational Health & Safety Policy

Procedures

General

The Committee is responsible for:

- Running a 'Living Safely With Dogs' education session for each four year old kinder group, parents and staff at the beginning of the 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
- Supplying a First Aid Kit on site at Bush Kinder 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 parklands.
- 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
- 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:
 - i. *If a dog off a lead enters the Bush Kinder 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 from the bush kinder site and put the dog on a lead
 - ii. *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
 - 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

- iii. *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 'Living Safely With Dogs' 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

Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the 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 centre survey.
- 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.

Authorisation

Endorsed by the Helen Paul Kindergarten Committee of Management on **2 March, 2020**.

Review Date

This policy will be reviewed every two years and is next due for formal Committee review in **2022**, unless deemed necessary earlier.