

Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Set out clear guidelines for parents and staff regarding appropriate clothing to be worn by children attending Bush Kinder in various weather conditions to ensure their safety and wellbeing (including a description of clothing which should not be worn)
- Provide clear guidelines regarding the change of clothes requirements for Bush Kinder participants
- Provide an appropriate mechanism for communication of the protective clothing requirements for Bush Kinder sessions to parents

Policy statement

1. Values

Helen Paul Kindergarten is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for children participating in the Bush Kinder program
- Facilitating a Bush Kinder experience in a variety of (safe) weather conditions, including rain, to allow children to experience nature across as broad a spectrum as possible and without compromising the safety of the participants
- Ensuring clothing worn by children in the program allows for maximum comfort, free movement and does not obstruct the children in their activities in the Bush Kinder setting
- Facilitating communication to parents to ensure compliance with this policy

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 intended to operate across a broad spectrum of weather conditions, allowing children to experience nature and its elements across the seasons. Whatever the weather, children are encouraged to take the lead in playing, exploring and learning in a bush or natural environment.

For this reason, there are some particular clothing requirements in the Bush Kinder setting that may differ from requirements in a centre-based environment.

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 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

Protective and appropriate clothing & footwear:

It is important that Bush Kinder participants wear appropriate and protective clothing and footwear which:

- allows children to move freely and undertake activities such as climbing, balancing, running, puddle jumping
- keeps children warm and dry in cold/wet weather
- protects children from the damaging effects of the sun, UV rays in warm weather and high UV conditions.
- prevents sunburn, bites, scratches and stings. Even in warm weather, long sleeve tops and long pants are recommended - this clothing should be loose fitting and light.
- Where possible is made from natural fabrics which allow breathability and is comfortable against the skin
- In the case of footwear, keeps feet and toes covered and has a flexible and gripped sole to allow children to climb and balance on uneven surfaces

The following table provides examples of recommended clothing, clothing which is not recommended and unacceptable clothing:

	Warm Weather	Cold Weather / Rain
Recommended clothing and footwear	Light, loose fitting long sleeve tops and long pants, broad brimmed or legionnaires hat, closed toe shoes	Waterproofs*, long pants, long sleeved top, beanie, waterproof gloves, thermals in very cold weather
Not recommended	short sleeved tops, long skirts or dresses, shorts	Skirts, dresses (incompatible with waterproofs)
Unacceptable clothing and footwear	Open toe shoes, sandals, thongs, Crocs, singlet tops	Non-waterproof clothing. [waterproofs on top of

		non-waterproof clothing is acceptable].
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* Waterproofs provided by Helen Paul Kindergarten.

Please note that children will not be permitted to climb trees if wearing gumboots, due to the increased risk of injury due to slipping.

Change of clothes: All children participating in Bush Kinder are required to bring a change of clothes as these may become wet and muddy. It is recommended that the spare clothing include:

- Spare top and bottoms of appropriate thickness/weight for the weather on the day
- Spare underpants (and singlet in winter)
- 2 pairs of socks

Waterproofs: Light rainproof suit worn over clothing, which includes a jacket with a hood, and pants or overalls, which zip up over clothing (provided by Helen Paul Kindergarten)

5. Sources and related policies

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 Dog Awareness 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:

- Implementing and maintaining a Protective Clothing Policy which provides clarity to parents and staff as to the appropriate clothing children are required to wear to Bush Kinder in various weather conditions to ensure their safety and wellbeing (including a description of clothing which should not be worn)

- All parents being aware of this policy and provided access to the policy at orientation sessions, in written Bush Kinder material, and made available upon request.
- Supplying waterproofs.
- Ensuring staff are appropriately educated on procedures in the event that children are not wearing compliant clothing
- Ensuring the Bush Kinder 'on-site kit' contains waterproofs

Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring all children being dropped off to Bush Kinder are wearing appropriate clothing in line with this policy. If inappropriate clothing is worn, staff are to:
 - Highlight to the parent dropping off the child which clothing is inappropriate and the reasons for it;
 - Determine if the change of clothing brought by that child is appropriate and request the parent change the clothes on the child if need be;
 - If the clothing has the potential to put the child's safety and wellbeing at risk and there is no suitable alternative clothing, inform parent that the child is not able to attend Bush Kinder
- Assisting changing the child's change of clothing if need be
- Encouraging children to tell a staff member if they need help with clothing or feel uncomfortable.
- During orientation sessions, advising parents of the clothing requirements for Bush Kinder
- Checking the contents of the Bush Kinder 'on site kit' prior to the next day's session to ensure it contains waterproofs

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring protective and appropriate clothing is worn to Bush Kinder by their child in line with this policy
- Changing their child's clothing as instructed by the teacher to enable their child to participate in the Bush Kinder session if required.
- Ensure their child's change of clothes includes items as set out in this policy
- Reading and being familiar with the policy
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee
- Changing children into waterproofs at the start of each session, when required

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.