

## **Purpose**

This policy aims to:

- Provide a framework around which well-informed decisions may be made by Helen Paul Kindergarten to cancel Bush Kinder session/s in response to forecast weather conditions, and ensure that parents/guardians understand this framework.

## **Policy Statement**

### **1. Values**

**Helen Paul Kindergarten** is committed to:

- ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children attending Bush Kinder
- meeting its duty of care obligations under the law.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day to Day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Helen Paul Kindergarten.

### **3. Background and Legislation**

Relevant legislation includes 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*

### **4. Definitions**

**Bureau of Meteorology:** Australia's national weather, climate and water agency.

[www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)

**Extreme Weather:** Weather that threatens the immediate or long-term safety of individuals, as a result of rain, lightning, wind, heat. The risk to individuals' wellbeing is guided by the forecast conditions according to the Bureau of Meteorology and the Environment Protection Authority (Victoria).

**Protective Clothing:** Refer to Protective Clothing Policy.

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## 5. Sources and related centre policies

Victorian Government [Better Health Channel](#)

Department of Education and Training: [Excursion emergency management](#)

Helen Paul Kindergarten policies

- Excursions & Service Events Policy
- Bush Kinder Delivery & Collection of Children Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Protective Clothing 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)
- Occupational Health & Safety Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Policy
- Sun Protection Policy
- Water Safety Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy

### Procedures

#### General

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- developing an Bush Kinder Extreme Weather Policy which gives clear guidelines to staff and parents about extreme weather conditions that will necessitate cancellation of an Bush Kinder session/s
- ensuring that staff, volunteers, students and others at the service are provided with a copy of the Bush Kinder Extreme Weather Policy and comply with its requirements
- ensuring communication channels are in place to facilitate notification to parents/guardians in the event of cancellation of a Bush Kinder session or if the group has been evacuated to a safe location in response to extreme weather conditions.

Staff are responsible for:

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

Helen Paul Kindergarten is committed to 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. Bush kinder will be cancelled only in times of extreme weather (as detailed below), or due to staff assessment of suitability on the day:

<b>Weather Condition</b>	<b>Extreme weather determinant causing cancellation.</b>
Forecast temperature	36 degrees Celsius or greater
Forecast wind speed	In excess of 45 kilometres per hour
Forecast of electrical storm activity	Thunderstorm/electrical storm forecast
Flooding at or near the bush kinder site	On flooding advice from the Council.
Weather warnings of extreme storm conditions and excessive rainfall	On warning issued by Bureau of Meteorology.
Forecast air quality	Air quality category of Poor, Very Poor or Hazardous as determined by <a href="#">EPA AirWatch   Environment Protection Authority Victoria</a>

In addition to the above, Helen Paul Kindergarten has the discretion to cancel a session/s if it views the weather to be unsuitable for Bush Kinder purposes, even if the extreme weather determinants in the above table are not reached.

Further, the Council has the authority to override the Helen Paul Kindergarten determination on safety and request cancellation of a session should the Council feel the Bush Kinder site be unsafe.

Staff are responsible for:

- Monitoring the weather forecast via the Bureau of Meteorology website (or via mobile phone app) and EPA Airwatch the day prior to the Bush Kinder session.
- Making a determination to cancel or conduct the Bush Kinder session based on the weather forecast.

If the session must be cancelled due to extreme weather conditions:

- Staff to notify parents by SMS (via CareMonkey) by 8pm the day before the session, (or by no later than 8am on the day of the session in the event of changes to the forecast)
- In extreme circumstances, an Bush Kinder session may be cancelled at any other time by broadcast SMS based on updated weather information.

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

Staff are responsible for:

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

<b>Weather Condition</b>	<b>Staff Actions</b>

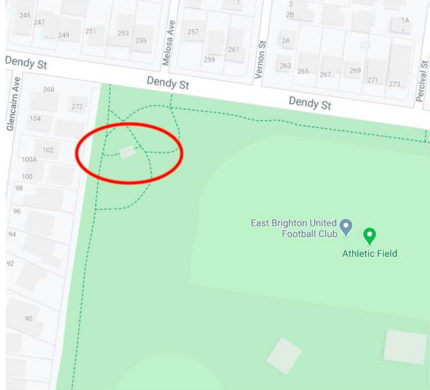
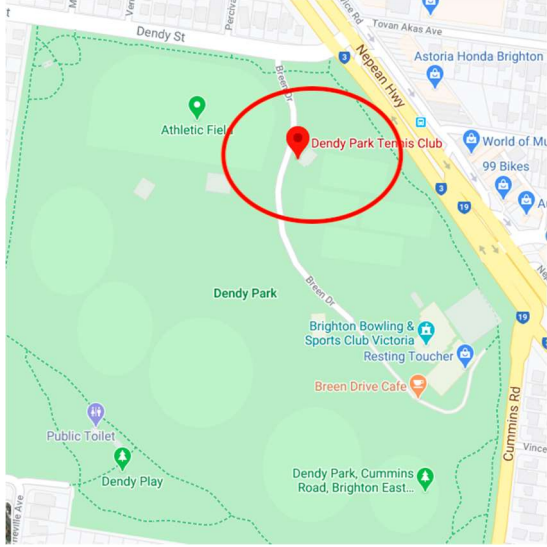
<p><b>Heat</b> Risks include sunburn, heat stress, heat stroke and dehydration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor children for heat exhaustion/heat stroke (see Attachment 2 for symptoms and treatments).</li> <li>• Offer water for hydration at regular intervals.</li> <li>• Establish 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 is worn, including hats. [Refer Protective Clothing Policy for more information].</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rain/Hail/Cold</b> Risks include child getting wet (and onset of hypothermia), injury from hailstones.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor children for wet clothing and change if necessary</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate clothing is worn (e.g. waterproof clothing and gloves).</li> <li>• Encourage wearing of appropriate clothing, including coats, gloves and scarves etc.</li> <li>• Seek shelter in heavy rain or in hail [See Relocation Procedures below].</li> </ul>
<p><b>Electrical Storm Activity / Lightning</b> Risks include lightning strike, trees/tree limbs falling as a result of lightning strike.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move children away from trees.</li> <li>• Seek indoor shelter [See Relocation Procedures below].</li> <li>• See Attachment 3 for Preparation and Safety during thunderstorms</li> </ul>
<p><b>High winds</b> Risks include falling trees/tree limbs, blowing particles (sand, dirt) into eyes, Bush Kinder structures blowing down/away etc.</p>	<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 if necessary [See Relocation Procedures below].</li> <li>• Any equipment/structures must be moved by at least two staff/volunteers to minimise risk of injury.</li> <li>• If the children are being moved, follow the 'Relocating to a safe position' instructions below.</li> </ul>

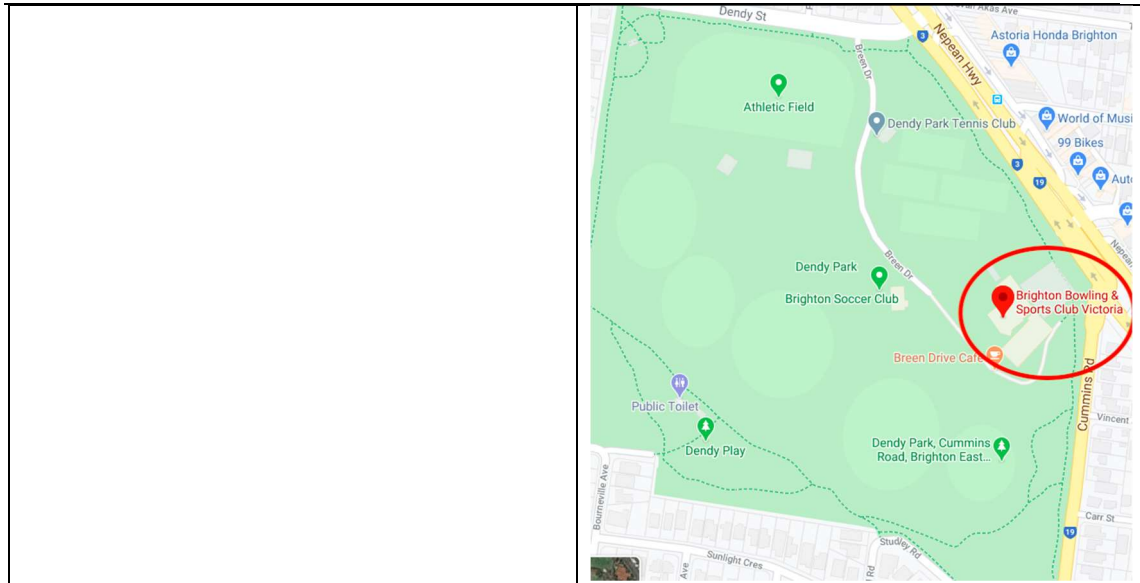
- In the event of illness or injury during a session as a result of weather conditions, the Illness Policy and Incident and Medical Emergency Management Policy must be followed.

- Contacting parent/guardian in the event that a child is ill or injured in accordance with the Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Policy.

## Procedures for Relocating to a Safe Position

### Relocation Safe Zones

<p>Hail, torrential rain.</p>	<p>Seek shelter under picnic shelter in fenced playground on Dendy Street</p> 
<p>Electrical storm/lightning, extreme winds</p>	<p>Seek shelter in Dendy Park Tennis Club</p>  <p>Seek shelter in Brighton Bowling and Sports Club</p>



If conditions necessitate evacuation from the location specified above, follow procedures in the Emergency Evacuation Policy (Bush Kinder specific).

### *Procedures for relocating*

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
- With the exception of the teacher's backpack, leave Bush Kinder gear at the site – it can be collected later
- En route to new location (see below for appropriate locations), calmly walk children in pairs, 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, a broadcast SMS should be sent to all parents, advising of the new safe location for pickup purposes.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

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- reading and complying with the requirements of this Bush Kinder Extreme Weather Policy
  - Ensuring they are comfortable at all times with the forecast weather conditions, while their child is attending a Bush Kinder session. If for any reason, a parent/guardian feels concern for the wellbeing of their child due to the weather conditions, they should consider withholding their child from the session or collect their child from a session in the event that extreme weather arises during a session.
  - Ensuring protective clothing is worn by their child to suit the weather conditions and ensure a change of clothes is provided. (Refer to Protective Clothing Policy).

### **Evaluation**

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the Committee of Management will:

- seek feedback about this policy and its implementation from parents of children participating in the Bush Kinder program. This can be facilitated through discussions and the annual survey
- ask staff to share their experiences and observations about the effectiveness of this policy
- regularly review the policy and Kinder practices to ensure they comply with any new legislation, research or best practice procedures.

### **Attachments**

Attachment 1: Cancellation Process Flowchart

Attachment 2: Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke – Symptoms and Treatments.

Attachment 3: Preparation and Safety during Thunderstorms

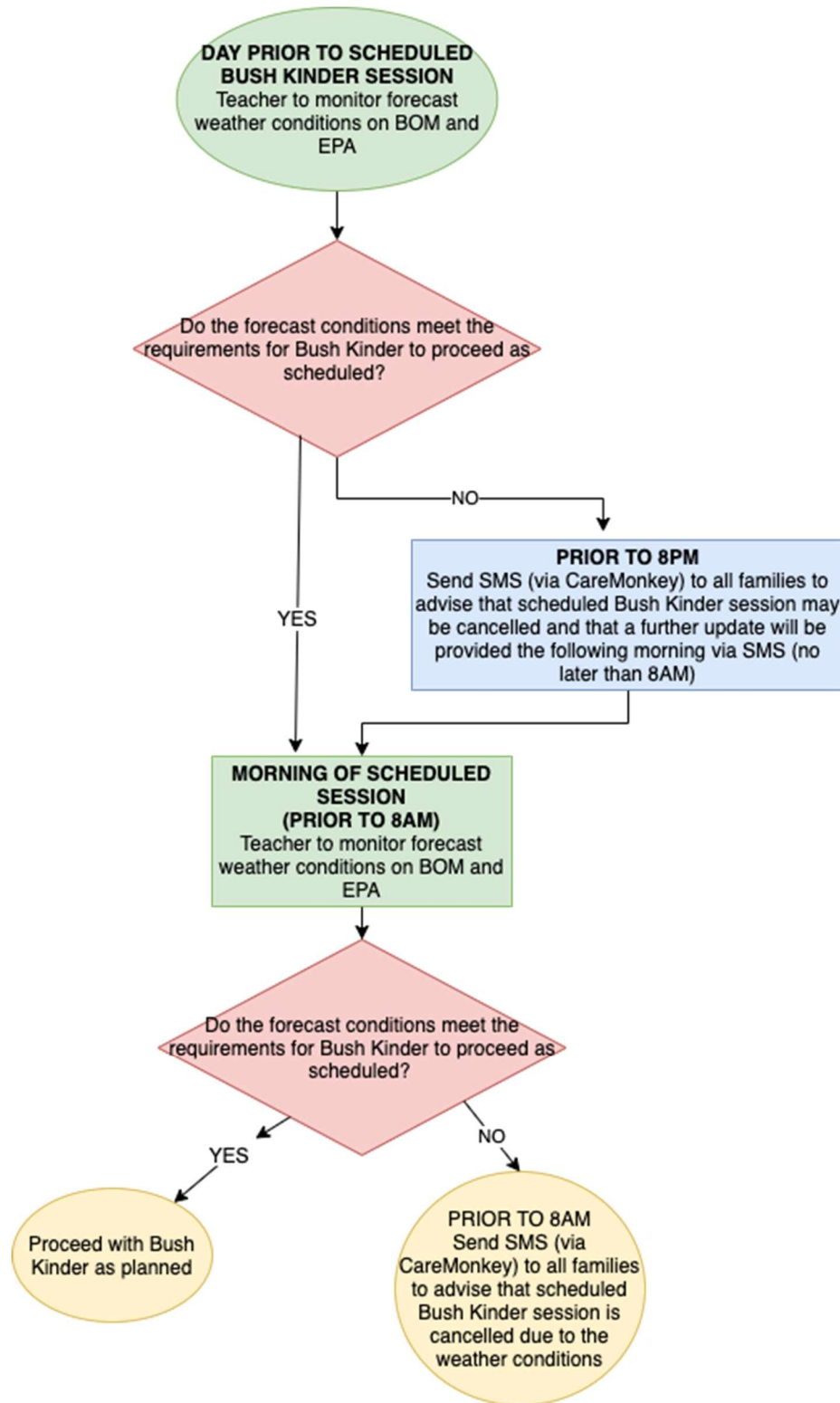
### **Authorisation**

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.

**ATTACHMENT 1: Cancellation Process Flowchart**





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## **ATTACHMENT 2: Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke – Symptoms and Treatments**

Source: Better Health Channel (Victorian Government) - [Heat stress and heat-related illness](#)

### **Treatment for heat-related illness**

Treatment options vary according to the type of heat-related illness. Apply first aid and seek medical assistance immediately if you, or someone you are with, shows any sign of heat exhaustion or heatstroke.

### **Heat rash – treatment**

Treatment for heat rash includes:

- Move the person to a cooler, less humid environment
- Keep the affected area dry
- Try using unperfumed talcum powder to increase comfort
- Avoid using ointments or creams, as they keep the skin warm and moist, and may make the condition worse.

### **Heat cramps – treatment**

Treatment for heat cramps includes:

- Stop activity and sit quietly in a cool place.
- Increase fluid intake.
- Rest a few hours before returning to activity.
- Seek medical help if there is no improvement.

### **Dizziness and fainting – treatment**

Treatment for dizziness or fainting includes:

- Get the person to a cool area and lay them down.
- If fully conscious, increase fluid intake.

### **Heat exhaustion – treatment**

Treatment for heat exhaustion includes:

- Get the person to a cool area and lay them down
- Remove outer clothing.
- Wet skin with cool water or wet cloths.
- Increase fluid intake if they are fully conscious.
- Seek medical advice

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### **Heatstroke – treatment**

Heatstroke is a medical emergency and requires urgent attention:

- Call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.
- Get the person to a cool, shady area and lay them down while you're waiting for emergency medical help.
- Remove clothing and wet their skin with water, fanning continuously.
- Do not give the person fluids to drink.
- Position an unconscious person on their side and clear their airway.
- If medical attention is delayed, seek further instructions from ambulance or hospital emergency staff.

### **ATTACHMENT 3: Preparation and safety during thunderstorms**

Source: Department of Education and Training: [Excursion emergency management](#)

#### Lightning strike

If thunder happens within 30 seconds of lightning, then the storm is within 10 kilometres of your location. Lightning safety experts consider this the strike danger zone and advise people to follow the 30/30 rule.

#### **The 30/30 rule**

Follow the precautions outlined below when thunder is heard within 30 seconds of a lightning flash and wait for 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard to resume your activity. If you're unable to take shelter inside, find the safest accessible location and stay there until the storm has passed.

#### **General precautions**

- Stay away from metal poles, fences, clothes lines
- If undertaking water activities, leave the water immediately.
- Discard all metal objects.

If shelter is near-by

- Seek shelter in a hard top vehicle or solid building. Avoid small structures or fabric tents.
- Keep clear of windows.

If shelter is not available

- Crouch (alone, feet together), preferably in a hollow. Make yourself a small target.
- Remove metal objects from head/body.
- Do not lie down (the more of you that is in contact with the ground, the more 'attractive' you are to lightning) but avoid being highest object.
- If your hair stands on end or you hear buzzing on nearby rocks, fences, move immediately. At night, a blue glow may show if an object is about to be struck.
- Stay away from high and low points (hilltops, ridges and gullies), rock overhangs and shallow caves.
- Keep out of, and well away from, water bodies or watercourses.
- Never shelter under tree/s.
- Make sure the group is aware of the Lightning Safe Position; this involves:
  - squatting or crouching with knees drawn up and feet together, preferably on dry insulating material (foam mat)
  - keeping hands off the ground.
  - Spread group members out – about ten metres apart, but within calling distance

