

DOG AWARENESS

QUALITY AREA 3 – BEST PRACTICE | HOME ROAD KINDERGARTEN



PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clearly provide:

- Procedures for dealing with dogs off leash that may enter the Bush Kinder site or other local parklands
- Guidelines for dealing with an angry or threatening dog
- The appropriate medical response to dog bites
- A framework for the appropriate education and training of children, staff and parents/guardians on how to live safely with dogs.



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Home Road Kindergarten acknowledges the Boonwurrung people of the Kulin nation as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which the kindergarten is located and pays respect to elders past, present and emerging.

Home Road Kindergarten is committed to being an inclusive learning environment that:

- Welcomes, supports and celebrates all children and families
- Respects the rights of the child and values diversity
- Values the contribution of Aboriginal children, children from culturally linguistically and diverse backgrounds and children with a disability
- Has zero tolerance of discrimination
- Maintains a duty of care (*refer to Definitions*) towards all children at the service
- Is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all staff and the members of our service and community.

Home Road is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for children and staff participating in the Bush Kinder program or visiting local parklands
- Being respectful of the community space that the Bush Kinder site or local parklands offers, including an awareness of dogs being walked off leash in the area
- Providing appropriate communication and education to children, staff and parents/guardians to minimise the risk of injury of a dog bite to children and staff during Bush Kinder or visits to local parklands.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, parents/guardians, staff, committee members, authorised persons, volunteers and students on placement working at Home Road Kindergarten during all programs (3 and 4 year old Kindergarten and Bush/Beach 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
Ensuring that an education session on dog safety is held prior to off site experiences and as early as possible each year for all three and four-year-old kindergarten groups and Beach/Bush Kinder and associated staff	√	√			
Supplying a First Aid Kit for Bush/Beach Kinder, excursions and regular local outings to administer first aid in response to dog bites or for any other purpose.	√				
Encouraging parents, through this policy, to practise safe dog behaviour 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/Beach Kinder site or at local parklands and in the event of a dog attack (<i>See Attachment 1</i>)	√				
Ensuring all procedures are followed as set out in the Administration of First Aid Policy and the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy (including notice of notifiable incidents, appropriate record keeping in the event of an incident, maintaining first aid kit etc.)	√				
Continually educating children on the appropriate behaviour around dogs, including recognising warning signs, the correct way to approach a dog and what to do if approached by an aggressive dog e.g. stand still, hands by side, no eye contact.		√	√		
Establishing a protocol whereby parents do not bring dogs onto the Bush/Beach Kinder site or when visiting local parklands		√	√		
Ensuring Bush/Beach Kinder signage and boundary points are clearly visible when operating in parklands and foreshore		√	√		
Remaining vigilant concerning the presence of dogs and other animals during Bush/Beach Kinder sessions and visits to local parklands		√	√		
Administering first aid in the event of a dog attack		√	√		
Ensuring incidents and near misses are reported in Incident Register		√	√		
Staff are to follow procedures as set out in the <i>Administration of First Aid Policy</i> and the <i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy</i> including contacting parent/guardian, calling ambulance etc		√	√		
Ensuring that their family pet dogs are safely restrained outside the kindergarten. Parents/guardians are requested not to bring their family pet dogs onto kindergarten premises or Bush/Beach Kinder site or local parklands during session				√	

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
Practising safe dog behaviour 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

- Refer to *Attachment 1* Procedures for dog-related incidents



BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

Home Road Kindergarten’s programs utilise the facilities at various community locations and conduct our Bush/Beach Kinder program in community parkland which allows dogs to be walked off leash in designated areas. It is important that children, staff and parents/guardians 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 Law 2010 (Vic)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007
- Occupational Health and Safety Compliance Codes,
- First Aid in the Workplace (2008)

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 commonly used terms e.g. approved provider, nominated supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the General Definitions file section of the Policy Works catalogue.

Safe behaviour around dogs: The following rules are recommended by the Department of Environment and Primary Industry’s ‘Living Safely With Dogs’ program and the Responsible Pet Ownership program 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:
 - o ASK the permission of the owner
 - o Let the dog smell the back of your hand first
 - o Pat dogs gently and calmly from the collar to the tail
 - o Do not pat a dog on its head
- Stand still if a dog approaches (don’t make direct eye contact, look at the ground, 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’
- Agriculture Victoria’s ‘Living Safely With Dogs’ and Responsible Pet Ownership education programs

Related Policies

- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Excursions and Service Events Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy

EVALUATION

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



- Where deemed appropriate, encourage feedback regarding this policy and its implementation with parents/guardians of children participating in the 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.
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any substantial changes to this policy, which would impact on the supervision or care of children.



• **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1: Procedures for dog-related incidents

• **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Home Road Kindergarten in February 2023

REVIEW DATE: 2024



ATTACHMENT 1. PROCEDURES FOR DOG-RELATED INCIDENTS

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

1. If a dog off a leash enters the Bush/Beach Kinder site or local parkland area:

- Educators are to announce, “dog off leash” and model/remind children to stand still and not to touch or encourage the dog or make any sudden movements
- If a dog approaches while children are eating, educators will instruct children to close their lunchboxes and sit still with hands in their laps. Children are to be instructed not to try to recover an item of food from a dog if the dog snatches it
- Locate the owner, if possible, and encourage the owner to move the dog away from the Bush/Beach Kinder site or local parkland area
- Educators let children know that the dog has gone and they can resume play or eating

2. If an aggressive and threatening dog enters the Bush/Beach Kinder Site or local parkland area:

- 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 leash and move the dog away from the Bush Kinder site or local parkland area
- If staff are concerned, please note breed of dog and any identifying details, e.g. red collar, and alert Hobsons Bay City 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:
 - Comfort the child
 - Another educator to move the other children away to a safe place
 - If the skin has been broken, wash the area under cold running water
 - Cover the bite with a clean dressing
 - Notify parents/guardians of the need to take the child to the doctor, as medical treatment 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
 - Do not give the child any food or water.