

DOG AWARENESS POLICY

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

1. VALUES

Home Road Kindergarten 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.

2. 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 Kinder program).

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Home Road Kindergarten's programs utilise the facilities at various community locations and conduct our Bush 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 includes but is 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: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

4. 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* section of this manual.

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:
 - ASK the permission of the owner
 - 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, 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

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Better Health Channel Website: Child Safety 'Children & Animals'
- Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industry's 'Living Safely With Dogs' and Responsible Pet Ownership education programs

Centre Policies

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

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a 'Living Safely with Dogs' / 'Responsible Pet Ownership' education session is held in term 1 each year for each four year old kindergarten group and staff. In addition, ensuring educators incorporate a similar program for all three year old kindergarten groups.
- Supplying a First Aid Kit on site at Bush Kinder or when visiting local parklands to administer first aid in response to dog bites or for any other purpose.
- Encouraging parents, through this policy, to practice 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 Kinder site or at local parklands and in the event of a dog attack.

- 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.)

The Nominated Supervisor and all other Staff are responsible for:

- Organising the ‘Living Safely with Dogs’ / ‘Responsible Pet Ownership’ education session during term 1 each year for each four year old kindergarten group and staff. In addition, ensuring educators incorporate a similar program for all three year old kindergarten groups. Particular attention in the session will be 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
- 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
- Establishing a protocol whereby parents do not bring dogs onto the Bush Kinder site or when visiting local parklands
- Ensuring Bush Kinder signage is clearly visible when operating in parklands
- Remaining vigilant concerning the presence of dogs and other animals during Bush Kinder sessions and visits to local parklands
- Requesting other parkland users not to interfere/interact with children in the program
- Administering first aid in the event of a dog attack
- Following procedures in the event of a dog in attack mode
- Ensuring incidents and near misses are reported in Incident Register
- 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 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
 - Locate the owner, if possible, and encourage the owner to move the dog away from the Bush Kinder site or local parkland area
 - 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 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.
- Staff are to follow procedures as set out in the *Administration of First Aid Policy* and the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy* including contacting parent/guardian, calling ambulance etc.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their family pet dogs are safely restrained outside the kindergarten.
Parents/guardians are not allowed to bring their family pet dogs onto kindergarten premises or Bush Kinder site
- Practicing 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
- If possible, attending the 'Living Safely With Dogs' or 'Responsible Pet Ownership Program' education session as provided by the committee
- 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.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the committee will:

- Where deemed appropriate, encourage feedback regarding this policy and its implementation with parents/guardians of children participating in all kindergarten programs (3 and 4 year old kindergarten including Bush Kinder).
- 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 of care of children.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Home Road Kindergarten on 11 March 2020.

REVIEW DATE: MARCH 2022