



Bush Kinder Bush Kinder Dog Awareness Policy

Purpose

NQS: Quality Area 2

This policy aims to clearly define:

- Procedures for dealing with dogs, in particular when 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

Values

Maribyrnong 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 leads 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 Maribyrnong Kindergarten.

3. Background and legislation

Maribyrnong Kindergarten's Bush Kinder program is conducted in community parkland which allows dogs to be walked off leads 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 Standard
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007

4. Definitions

Safe behaviour around dogs: The following rules are recommended by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries 'Living Safely With Dogs' program and 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
- Always 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, 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

Better Health Channel Website: Child Safety 'Children & Animals' Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries 'Living Safely With Dogs' Education Program

Kindergarten policies

- Excursion & Regular Outing Policy
- 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 (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Snake Awareness Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Protective Clothing Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Occupational Health & Safety Policy
- Incident, Illness, Trauma & Illness Policy
- Clothing Policy
- Sun Protection Policy
- Water Safety Policy

- Supervision of Children Policy
- Learning through Play Policy
- Learning Spaces Policy
- Child Safe Environment 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. 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

- Staff member to call 'Dog off lead' to alert children and other staff
- 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 the bush kinder site and put the dog on a lead

ii. If an aggressive and threatening dog enters the Bush Kinder Site

- Staff member to call 'Dog off lead' to alert children and other staff
- Remind children to keep quiet and still, look down (no eye-contact with dog), and put arms by sides, with relaxed hands and their thumbs tucked in.

- 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 values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or following an incident at Bush Kinder, to identify any changes required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).

Attachments Nil.

Authorisation Endorsed by the Maribyrnong Kindergarten Committee of Management on **13 March 2025**

Review Date March 2028

This policy will be reviewed every three years and is next due for formal Committee review in 2028, unless deemed necessary earlier.