

# BUSH KINDER: EXTREME WEATHER

## QUALITY AREA 2



Working in partnership with Cancer Council Victoria, ELAA has aligned this policy to the key policies and guidelines of the Healthy Early Childhood Services Achievement Program.

This policy, Bush Kinder Extreme Weather, is a special circumstance policy, which augments the main Ferguson Park Preschool *Supervision of Children Policy* and should be read in conjunction with this policy.



### PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for Ferguson Park Preschool to:

- provide a framework around which well-informed decisions may be made by Ferguson Park Preschool to cancel Bush Kinder session/s in response to forecast weather conditions, and ensure that parents understand this framework
- ensure the health and safety of all children and staff when the weather conditions become extreme during a session
- provide guidelines for staff in the event of extreme weather during a Bush Kinder session
- provide an appropriate mechanism for communication of session cancellations in extreme weather conditions
- impress upon parents that they may collect their child from a Bush Kinder session at any time in response to the weather conditions (or for any other reason) according to the instructions in Bush Kinder Parent Handbook.



### POLICY STATEMENT

#### VALUES

Ferguson Park Preschool:

- 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
- accessing appropriate resources to enable well-informed determinations to be made regarding weather conditions
- facilitating effective and timely communication to parents regarding weather conditions, cancellations or relocation of children in the event of extreme weather
- respecting the right of parents to remove their child from a Bush Kinder session at any time in response to the weather conditions (or for any other reason).

#### SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Ferguson Park Preschool Bush 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
	R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted				
An Extreme Weather Policy which gives clear guidelines to staff and parents about extreme conditions that will necessitate cancellation of a bush kinder session/s and provides guidance and procedures for staff in the event of extreme weather during a Bush Kinder session	R				
All parents/guardians being aware of this policy and are provided access to the policy upon request	R				
Ensuring that the Bush Kinder Mobile Phone is charged so educators can SMS all parents of children in a session and always receive/make calls		✓	✓		
Monitoring the weather forecast via the Bureau of Meteorology website (or via mobile phone app) the day prior and the morning of the Bush Kinder session			✓		
Deciding to cancel based on the weather forecast - in cases of forecast Extreme Weather (see definitions), the 4 year old Teacher/Person in Charge of the Bush Kinder Session will make the decision to cancel the Bush Kinder program for the session/s affected			✓		
In addition to the Extreme Weather determinants detailed in the table under ‘Definitions’, the 4 year old Teacher/Person in Charge of the Bush Kinder Session has the discretion to cancel the session if it views the weather to be unsuitable for Bush Kinder purposes. Nillumbik Shire also has the authority to request that the Centre cancel a session due to extreme weather conditions at the site as stated above			✓		
AND IF THE SESSION IS CANCELLED, notifying parents by StoryPark posts or a notification to the Responsible Parent on the Phone Chain from the Bush Kinder Mobile Phone on the day of the session if Bush Kinder is to be cancelled. If cancelled, the kindergarten session will therefore take place at Ferguson Park Preschool on that day			✓		
Keeping the Bush Kinder Mobile Phone charged, turned on, within hearing capabilities and on an educator at all times whilst the Bush Kinder Session is taking place (including the walk back to Ferguson Park Preschool)		✓	✓		
Checking the mobile phone on the day of bush kinder sessions to receive notice of cancellation in cases of extreme weather updates which necessitate cancellation		✓	✓		



Ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of this policy as part of their induction	✓	✓			
Ensuring they are always comfortable with the forecast weather conditions, while their child is attending a Bush Kinder session. If, for whatever 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 and/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 (including shoes) Refer to the <i>Bush Kinder: Protective Clothing Policy</i>				✓	
Reading and being familiar with the policy				✓	✓
Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and Committee				✓	
IN THE EVENT OF WEATHER BECOMING EXTREME DURING A SESSION; ( <i>refer to Attachment 1: Actions In the event of weather becoming extreme during session</i> ) staff Undertaking the following actions in each of the weather conditions listed in the table in Attachment 1		✓	✓	✓	✓
In the event of illness or injury during a session as a result of weather conditions, the <i>Administration of First Aid Policy</i> and the <i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy</i> and <i>Bush Kinder: Emergency Evacuation Policy</i> must be followed		✓	✓	✓	✓
Contacting parent/guardian in the event that a child is ill or injured in accordance with <i>the Administration of First Aid Policy</i> and the <i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓



## PROCEDURES

- **Session cancellation:** If a bush kinder session is cancelled mid-session due to extreme weather, parents/guardians will be contacted via StoryPark from the kinder mobile phone and will be able to collect their children in accordance with the *Bush Kinder: Emergency Evacuation Policy*. For those children that are unable to be collected they will be walked back to Ferguson Park Preschool at a safe time, via a safe route in accordance with the *Bush Kinder: Emergency Evacuation Policy*.
- **Parents/guardians are responsible for:** Collecting their child at any time during the session if they are not comfortable with the weather conditions, and in an emergency. Parents will be notified via StoryPark. Procedures for relocating to a Safe Position: Relocate the session in accordance with the *Bush Kinder Program: Emergency Evacuation Policy*.



## BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

### BACKGROUND

Ferguson Park Preschool's Bush Kinder program is intended to operate across a broad spectrum of weather conditions, allowing the 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. However, extreme weather conditions may arise periodically which can put the wellbeing and safety of the children and staff at risk. This policy provides the parameters within which the kindergarten can make determinations to cancel bush kinder sessions in response to forecast extreme weather conditions and ensure appropriate communication channels are in place to inform participants. It also provides a framework for staff in the event that extreme weather conditions arise during a session and provides procedures for effective evacuation to a safe location.

### LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are 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

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)



### DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

**Bureau of Meteorology:** Australia's national weather, climate and water agency. Website, various iphone/ipad apps use BOM data (e.g., Pocket Weather)

**Extreme Weather:** weather that threatens the immediate or long-term safety of individuals, as a result of rain, lightning, wind or heat. The risk to individuals' wellbeing is guided by the Bureau of Meteorology's forecast conditions. An extreme weather table is shown below.

Bush kinder sessions will be cancelled if any of these determinants are met:

TABLE OF EXTREME WEATHER

WEATHER CONDITION	Extreme weather determinant causing cancellation of Bush Kinder Session
Forecast Temperature	BOM forecasted temperature above 29-35 degrees at midday on the day of the session. Thermals and clothing layers should be worn on very cold days (refer to <i>Bush Kinder: Protective Clothing Policy</i> )



Forecast wind speed	Wind gusts > 35km per hour. Educators will use their discretion to decide if appropriate to cancel the session.
Forecast of electrical storm activity	Thunderstorm/electrical storm forecast
Forecast of hail or torrential rain	Heavy hail or torrential rain predicted
Forecast fire risk	Total Fire Ban days

In addition to the above, Ferguson Park Preschool has the discretion to cancel a session/s if it views the weather to be poor for Bush Kinder purposes, even if the extreme weather determinants in the above table are not reached. Weather warnings from the Bureau of Meteorology for the area may also necessitate cancellation.



## SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### SOURCES

- Kidsafe: [www.kidsafe.com.au](http://www.kidsafe.com.au)
- The Royal Children's Hospital Community Information team (formerly Safety Centre) provides information on safety promotion and injury prevention: [www.rch.org.au](http://www.rch.org.au)
- WorkSafe Victoria: [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)
- Guide to the National Quality Framework (ACECQA): <http://acecqa.gov.au/>
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law 2010 and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 ACECQA): <http://acecqa.gov.au/>

### RELATED POLICIES

- Bush Kinder: Emergency Evacuation
- Excursions and Service Events
- Incident Injury Trauma and Illness
- Supervision of Children



## EVALUATION

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

- notify 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)*)
- where deemed appropriate, encourage feedback regarding this policy and its implementation with parents/guardians of children participating in the Bush Kinder 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.



## ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Actions In the event of weather becoming extreme during session

**Bush Kinder: Extreme Weather** | Date Reviewed June 24

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Email [ferguson.park.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au](mailto:ferguson.park.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au)



- Attachment 2: First Aid Recommendations for Lightning Victims



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### **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Ferguson Park Preschool on **05/06/2024**.

**REVIEW DATE:** 05/06/2025.

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## ATTACHMENT 1. ACTIONS IN THE EVENT OF WEATHER BECOMING EXTREME DURING SESSION

WEATHER CONDITION	STAFF ACTIONS
Heat Risks include sunburn, heat stress, heat stroke, dehydration	<p>Monitor children for heat exhaustion/heat stroke in accordance with the signs/symptoms and treatments set out in the Level 2 (HLTFA311A) First Aid Training all staff have undertaken</p> <p>Offer water for hydration at regular intervals</p> <p>Establish activities in shaded areas and encourage children to play in the shade</p> <p>Ensure application of sunscreen every two hours</p> <p>Ensure appropriate protective clothing including hats (Refer to <i>Bush Kinder: Protective Clothing Policy</i> for more information).</p>
Rain/Hail/Cold Risks include child getting wet (and onset of hypothermia), injury from hailstones	<p>Monitor children for wet clothing and change if necessary</p> <p>Ensure appropriate clothing is worn (e.g., waterproof clothing, gloves)</p> <p>Where necessary undertaking the emergency evacuation procedures as set out in the <i>Bush Kinder: Emergency Evacuation Policy</i>.</p>
Electrical storm activity/lightning Risks include lightning strike, trees/tree limbs falling as a result of lightning strike	<p>Move children away from trees.</p> <p>Evacuate in accordance with the emergency evacuation procedures as set out in the <i>Bush Kinder: Emergency Evacuation Policy</i>.</p> <p>See <i>Attachment 2 for First Aid Recommendations for Lightning Victims</i>.</p>
High winds Risks include falling trees/tree limbs, blowing particles (sand dirt) into eyes, Bush Kinder structures blowing down/away etc.	<p>Ensure structures and dangerous items are secure</p> <p>Move children away from trees</p> <p>Evacuate in accordance with the emergency evacuation procedures as set out in the <i>Bush Kinder: Emergency Evacuation Policy</i>.</p>



## ATTACHEMNT 2. FIRST AID RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LIGHTNING VICTIMS

SOURCE: CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (<https://www.cdc.gov/lightning/safety>)

### HOW TO HELP

Giving first aid to lightning strike victims while waiting for professional medical attention can save their lives. It is safe to touch a lightning strike victim. People struck by lightning do not carry a charge.

Follow these four steps immediately to help save the life of a lightning strike victim:

#### 1. CALL FOR HELP CALL 000 IMMEDIATELY.

Give directions to your location and information about the strike victim(s) (i.e. how many victims are there, where was the victim struck, is the storm still continuing). It is safe to use a mobile phone during a storm.

#### 2. ASSESS THE SITUATION SAFETY IS A PRIORITY.

Be aware of the continuing lightning danger to both the victim and rescuer. If the area where the victim is located is high risk (e.g., an isolated tree or open field), the victim and rescuer could both be in danger. If necessary, move the victim to a safer location. It is unusual for a victim who survives a strike to have any major broken bones that would cause paralysis or major bleeding complications unless the person suffered a fall or was thrown a long distance. Therefore, it may be safe to move the victim to minimize possible further exposure to lightning.

#### 3. RESPOND LIGHTNING MAY CAUSE CARDIAC ARREST.

Commence cardiopulmonary resuscitation if required following the basic life support guidelines.

**D** DANGER

**R** RESPONSIVENESS

**S** SEND FOR HELP

**A** OPEN AIRWAY

**B** NORMAL BREATHING

**C** START CPR 30 COMPRESSIONS : 2 BREATHS

**D** ATTACH DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) AS SOON AS AVAILABLE AND FOLLOW ITS PROMPTS

Continue resuscitation efforts until help arrives. If the area is cold and wet, putting a protective layer between the victim and the ground may help decrease hypothermia (abnormally low body temperature).

**IMPORTANT REMINDER: Lightning may also cause other injuries such as burns, shock, and sometimes blunt trauma. Treat each of these injuries with basic first aid until help arrives. Do not move victims who are bleeding or appear to have broken bones.**

