

Dog Awareness Policy

Quality Area: 2: Children's Health and Safety

Standard: 2.3: Each Child is protected

Element: 2.3.2: Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury

Purpose

This policy aims to clearly define:

- procedures for dealing with dogs off leads 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 appropriately educating and training children, staff and parents about living safely with dogs.

Policy Statement

1. Values

Heathmont East Preschool is committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy environment for children and staff participating in the Bush Kinder program
- respecting the community space that the Bush Kinder site offers, including being aware of dogs being walked off leads in the area
- communicating and educating staff and parents to minimise the risk of injury from a dog bite to children and staff during Bush Kinder.

2. Scope

This policy applies to parents, staff, committee members, authorised persons, volunteers and students on placement working at Heathmont East Preschool.

3. Background and Legislation

Background

Heathmont East Preschool's Bush Kinder program is conducted in community bushland where dogs are walked on and sometimes off leads. Children, staff and parents must be aware of the recommended behaviour around dogs. They must also undertake training to minimise the risk of dog attack injury.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation may include but is not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law 2010*
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- 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 Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources '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
 - 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.

Heathmont East policy and procedures

Heathmont East Preschool is responsible for:

- running a 'Living safely with dogs' education session for each four year old kinder group, when we can access this or presenting the topic ourselves using the Living safely with dogs CD and book. The session gives attention 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 if an aggressive or threatening dog approaches or attacks at the Bush Kinder site
- following all procedures as set out in the Incident, Illness, Trauma and Injury Policy (including notice of notifiable incidents, appropriate record keeping if an incident occurs, maintaining a first aid kit, etc).

Nominated supervisor, Teachers, educators and other 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 an aggressive dog approaches
 - administering first aid if a dog attacks
 - following procedures if a dog in attack mode approaches
 - reporting incidents in the log
 - ensuring children wash hand if they touch a dog
- Carrying out the following procedures if the following incidents occur:
1. ***If a dog off a lead enter the Bush Kinder site:***
 - a. remind children to stand still and not to touch or encourage the dog or make any sudden movements
 - b. locate the owner if possible and encourage the owner to move the dog away from the Bush Kinder site and put the dog on a lead.
 2. ***If an aggressive and threatening dog enters the Bush Kinder site:***
 - a. 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
 - b. encourage children to keep calm and not run
 - c. wait until the dog leaves the area before resuming activities
 - d. 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
 3. ***If a dog attacks a child or staff member:***
 - a. follow current first aid practice
 - b. follow procedures set out in the Incident, Illness, Trauma and Injury Policy, including contacting parent or next of kin, calling an ambulance, logging the incident.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- practicing safe dog behaviours at home and outside of the kinder
- teaching children how to behave around dogs to minimise risk of dog bites
- if possible, attending the ‘Living safely with dogs’ education session 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

To assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes Heathmont East Preschool will:

- Seek feedback regarding this policy and its implementation with parents of children participating in the Bush Kinder program. This can be facilitated through discussions and the annual centre survey.
- 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.

Sources and other related policies

Sources

- Better Health Channel: Child safety ‘Children and animals’ (www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)
- Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources: ‘Living safely with dogs’

Kindergarten policies

- Excursion & Service Events Policy
- Bush Kinder Extreme Weather Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Identification and Visibility Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Identification and Visibility Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Snake Awareness Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Dog Awareness Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)

- Bush Kinder Mini Beast Sting or Bite First Aid Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Play Benefits and Risk Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Medical Emergency Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Occupational Health & Safety Policy
- Sun Protection Policy
- Water Safety Policy
- Incident, Illness, Trauma & Illness Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy
- Child Safe Environment Policy

Attachments

Nil

Authorisation

This policy was approved and passed by the Heathmont East Committee of Management and adopted by Heathmont East Preschool on:

5/6/2024

Authorised by: Alison Uldrich [President]

Authorised by: Sarah Black [Nominated Supervisor]

Review Date: June 2027