

# **BUSH KINDER DOG AWARENESS POLICY**

## **Farm Road Pre-school**

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National Quality Framework – Quality Area 2

### **PURPOSE**

This policy will outline:

- 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 the appropriate education and training of children, staff, parents and children on how to live safely with dogs.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **1. VALUES**

Farm Road Pre-school 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 leash 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/guardians, staff, committee members, authorised persons, volunteers and students on placement working at Farm Road Pre-school.

#### **3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION**

##### **Background**

Farm Road Pre-school's Bush Kinder program is conducted in community parkland where there is an off-leash area for dogs. 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.

Due to the unpredictable nature of dogs, their owners and the varying responses children can have to dogs, Farm Road Pre-school requires that an adult be present whenever a child is interacting with a dog. This is designed to limit the risk to children, dogs and members of the public and to ensure children have clear guidelines around the appropriate response when dogs enter the Bush Kinder boundaries.

##### **Legislation and Standards**

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
- The Children’s Services Act 1996 (CSA)
- Children’s Services Regulations 2009 (CSR)
- Occupational Health and Safety Compliance Codes, First Aid in the Workplace (2008)

#### 4. DEFINITIONS

**Safe behaviour around dogs:** The following rules are recommended by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action 2025 “Living Safely with Dogs” Responsible Pet Ownership (RPO) program for children and reinforced by the Victorian Government’s Better Health Channel. Website: [agriculture.vic.gov.au](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au) and [betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://betterhealth.vic.gov.au).

When children are in the vicinity of dogs:

- 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;
- As per the recommendations from the Living Safely with Dogs Program, children will be taught “No Owner, No Leash, No Touch”;
- When approaching dogs, ALWAYS:
  - Ask the permission of the owner before patting the dog
  - 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). Do not make any sudden movements and refrain from touching the dog;
- 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’;
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action 2025 ‘Living Safely with Dogs’ Education Program.

##### Service policies

- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Administration of First Aid
- Hygiene
- Child Safe Environment
- Excursions and Service Events
- Occupational Health & Safety
- Bush Kinder Delivery & Collection of Children Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)

- Bush Kinder Extreme Weather Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Bush Kinder Safety and Hygiene 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)
- Water Safety Policy
- Supervision of Children

## PROCEDURES

### **The Committee of Management is responsible for:**

- Running a “Living Safely with Dogs” education session for each four-year-old kinder group, parents/guardians 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/guardians, 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 the 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, maintenance of the first aid kit etc.)

The Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, and other educators 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;
- Ensuring children do not approach dogs without an adult present;
- 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 the Accident/Incident/Trauma Report Book;
- Ensuring children their wash hands after 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-leash enters the Bush Kinder site:
    - Remind children to keep quiet and still, look down (no eye contact with the dog) and put arms by sides with hands in fists with thumbs on the inside. Do not make any sudden movements and refrain from touching the dog;
    - 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;
    - If appropriate, remind owners that dogs in the Bush Kinder site need to be on a lead.

- ii. If an aggressive and threatening dog enters the Bush Kinder Site:
- 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. Do not make any sudden movements and refrain from touching the dog.
  - 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.
  - If staff are concerned, they should note the breed of dog, and any identifying details (e.g. red collar) and notify the Local Laws Officers at the City of Kingston on the following number – 1300 653 356.
- 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.

The following procedures in response to a dog bite are listed on the Victorian Government’s Better Health Channel Website.

- Calm the child;
- If the skin has been broken, wash the area under cold running water;
- Clean wound using sterile saline solution and cover the bite with a clean dressing;
- Notify parents of the need to take the child to the doctor, as a tetanus booster and antibiotics 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 on a pillow or folded blanket;
- Do not give the child any food or water;
- Staff are to follow procedures as set out in Incident, Illness, Trauma & Illness Policy, including contacting parents, calling ambulance, logging incidents etc.
- Staff will also notify the Local Law Officers at the City of Kingston on 1300 653 356.

**Parents/guardians 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 of Management.

## **EVALUATION**

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the Approved Provider (Committee of Management) 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.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Farm Road Pre-School on the 27th of February 2026.

**REVIEW DATE: 27 February 2028**