BUSH KINDER PROTECTIVE CLOTHING POLICY

Farm Road Pre-school

National Quality Framework – Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

This policy aims to:

- Set out clear guidelines for parents and guardians and staff regarding appropriate clothing to be worn by children attending Bush Kinder in various weather conditions. This is to ensure participants safety and wellbeing and will include a description of clothing that should not be worn.
- Provide clear guidelines regarding the change of clothes requirements for Bush Kinder participants.
- Provide an appropriate mechanism for communication of the protective clothing requirements for Bush Kinder sessions to parents and guardians.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Farm Road Pre-School is committed to:

- 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 spectrum as possible and without compromising the safety of participants;
- Ensuring clothing worn by participants in the program allows for free movement and does not obstruct the children in their activities in the Bush Kinder setting. Allowing participants to remain comfortable.
- Facilitating communication to parents and guardians to ensure compliance with this policy.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to children, parents and guardians, teachers, co-educators, 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 intended to operate across a broad spectrum of weather conditions, allowing 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. For this reason, there are some particular clothing requirements in the Bush Kinder setting that may differ from the requirements in a classroom or usual kinder environment.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation may include but is not limited to:

- Children's Services Act 1996 (CSA);
- Education and Care Act & Regulations 2011 (CSR);
- Occupational Health & Safety Act 2017;
- National Quality Standard – Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

4. DEFINITIONS

- **Bush Kinder Space** – Kingston Heath Reserve, Farm Road, Cheltenham.
- **Change of Clothes** – All children participating in Bush Kinder are required to bring a change of clothes and footwear as they may become muddy and wet. It is recommended that the change of clothing include: -
  (a) Spare tops and bottoms of appropriate thickness and weight for the forecasted weather on the day;
  (b) Spare underwear – underpants (and singlet in winter);
  (c) Spare pairs of socks;
  (d) One pair of gumboots on days when required – (please note it is not recommended that gumboots be worn at all times due to the restriction of movement they impose);
  (e) Waterproofs – jacket and pants (these will be provided by Farm Road Pre-school if the weather dictates).

  Please note the Bush Kinder "on-site kit" will contain some spare clothing, however it is essential that each child comes prepared taking into account the anticipated weather conditions for the particular session of Bush Kinder.

- **Protective and Appropriate clothing and footwear** – It is important that Bush Kinder participants wear clothing and footwear which allows them to move freely and undertake activities such as climbing, balancing, puddle jumping and running, and keeps participants warm and dry in cold/wet weather and sun protected in warm weather.

  Clothing should:
  (a) Protect children from the damaging effects of the sun, UV rays in warm weather and in high UV conditions;
  (b) Prevent sunburn, bites, scratches and stings. Even in warm weather, long sleeve tops and long pants are recommended. Such clothing should be loose fitting and light.
  (c) Where possible be made from natural fabrics, which allow the body to breathe and are comfortable against the skin.

Footwear should:

(a) Keep feet and toes covered at all times;
(b) Have a flexible and gripped sole to allow children to climb and balance on uneven surfaces;
(c) Be weather appropriate.

The Waterproofs provided by Farm Road Pre-school consist of:

(d) Lightweight rainproof suit, (a jacket with hood and pants) which can be worn over clothing;
(e) Wide brimmed sunhat is also provided.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Service policies: -

- Extreme Weather Policy (Bush Kinder specific);
- Delivery and Collection Policy;
- Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Policy;
- Hygiene Policy;
- Sun Protection Policy;
- Nutrition & Active Play Policy;
- Water Safety Policy;
- Occupational Health & Safety Policy;
- Excursions & Incursions Policy;
- Bush Kinder Policies generally.

PROCEDURES

The Committee of Management is responsible for:

- Implementing and maintaining a Protective Clothing Policy which provides guidelines for parents and guardians, staff and volunteers as to the appropriate clothing participants are required to wear to Bush Kinder in various weather conditions.
- Ensuring parents and guardians are aware of this policy and are provided access to the policy at orientation sessions, and made available on request.
- Ensuring staff are appropriately educated on procedures in the event participants are not wearing or in possession of compliant clothing.
- Ensuring the Bush Kinder “on-site kit” contains spare clothing, waterproofs and gumboots.

The Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, and other educators are responsible for:

- Ensuring all children being delivered to participate in Bush Kinder are wearing or in possession of appropriate clothing in line with this policy. The following table provides examples of recommended clothing, clothing which is not recommended and clothing deemed unacceptable to allow participation.

Weather Conditions	Warm/Hot	Cold/Wet

Recommended clothing and footwear	Light, loose fitting long sleeved top and long pants. Broad brimmed hat or Legionnaires hat. Closed toe shoes. T-shirts also acceptable if sunscreen has been applied to arms	Waterproof jacket, raincoat, long pants, long sleeved top, beanie, waterproof gloves, warm socks and gumboots. Thermals are recommended in very cold weather.
Not Recommended	Long skirts or dresses and shorts.	Skirts and dresses – so as to enable waterproofs to be worn over clothing,
Unacceptable	Open toe shoes, sandals, thongs, crocs and singlet tops.	Non-waterproof outer clothing.

- If inappropriate clothing is worn or provided, staff are to:

  (a) Highlight to the parent or guardian delivering the participant which clothing is inappropriate and the reasons for it;
  (b) Determine if the change of clothes brought by the participant is appropriate and request that the parent or guardian change the participant's clothing;
  (c) Check the "on-site kit" and if possible, locate alternate appropriate clothing;
  (d) If the clothing has the potential to put the participant's safety and wellbeing at risk and there is no suitable alternate clothing available, advise the parent or guardian that the child may not participate in Bush Kinder for that session.

- Checking each participant's clothing periodically (this will include asking children if their clothes are wet, particularly given children can be absorbed in an activity and not notice) and changing a child's clothing if necessary.
- ensuring waterproof rainwear is provided for children if required;
- Encouraging children to tell a staff member if they have wet clothing;
- During orientation sessions, advising parents and guardians of the clothing requirements for Bush Kinder participation;
- Checking the contents of the Bush Kinder "on-site kit" prior to the next day's session to ensure it contains spare clothing and gumboots. If not, staff will make necessary arrangements prior to the next scheduled Bush Kinder session.
- Provide any additional or weather specific guidance to parents via the applicable mobile application and/or website being utilised by Farm Road Pre-school for the purpose of Bush Kinder.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Ensuring protective and appropriate clothing is worn to Bush Kinder by their child in line with this policy;

- Changing their child's clothing as instructed by the teacher to enable their child to participate in the Bush Kinder session;
- Ensure their child's change of clothes includes items as set out in this policy;
- Reading and familiarising themselves 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:

- Seek feedback regarding this policy and its implementation with parents and guardians of children participating in the Bush Kinder program. This can be facilitated through discussions and the annual Parent Survey;
- Ask staff to share their experiences and observations in relation to the effectiveness of this policy;
- Regularly review the policy and practices to ensure they are compliant with any new or amended legalisation, research or best practice procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

Not Applicable.

AUTHORISATION

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

REVIEW DATE: 27-02-2028.