



BUSH KINDER SNAKE AWARENESS POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

This policy aims to clearly define:

- The risk of snakes in the Bush Kinder space at Antonio Park
- Procedures for preventing snake bites at Bush Kinder
- The appropriate medical response to snake bites
- A framework for the appropriate education and training of staff, parents and children on minimising the risk of snake bites

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Rangeview Pre-School is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for children and staff participating in the Bush Kinder program
- Being respectful of wildlife in and around space the Bush Kinder space, including an awareness of the presence of snakes in the area during the warmer months
- Facilitating appropriate communication and education to staff and parents to minimise the risk of injury from a snake bite to children and staff during Bush Kinder sessions

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Person with Management or Control, Teachers, Educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Rangeview Pre-School.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Rangeview Pre-School's Bush Kinder Program is conducted within Antonio Park, and is recognised to be a site where snakes may be active and present. They are most prevalent in the warmer months of the year (September to April) but could be encountered on a sunny day at any time of the year.

Species of snakes that may be found in and around Antonio Park include brown snakes, tiger snakes, and copperheads. All snakes should be regarded as dangerous. However, if unprovoked, snakes rarely attack humans and are generally shy, timid animals that will avoid conflict if given the opportunity. It is recommended that particular care be taken in warm weather, near long grass or hollow logs, near water or rocks in sunny positions.

Snakes are protected under the Wildlife Act 1975, and should not be harmed or killed. Bites can occur if people try to catch or kill snakes.

Legislation

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Sections 167, 169
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 87, 89, 136, 137(1)(e), 168(2)(a),
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety; and Quality Area 3: Physical Environment
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*



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- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007*
- *Wildlife Act 1975*

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

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Australian Venom Research Unit (AVRU): an internationally recognised interdisciplinary research unit focused on the problem of venomous injury in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. Located within Melbourne University, the AVRU aims to provide world-class expertise in the problem of Australia's venomous creatures, their toxins and the care of the envenomed patient.

Pressure Immobilisation Bandage (also known as Compression Bandage): a bandage used for the purpose of applying pressure to the site of a wound (such as snakebite) and to the affected limb. Refer definition below of Pressure Immobilisation Bandaging

Pressure Immobilisation Bandaging: the principle of pressure immobilisation bandaging as a first aid measure is to prevent the spread of toxins through the body. This is done by applying enough pressure to compress the lymph vessels, and by preventing movement of the affected limb. Correct application of the technique can buy valuable time to get the patient medical assistance. (refer Attachment 1 for correct application of pressure immobilisation technique)

Victorian Poisons Information Centre (VPIC): located at the Austin Hospital, the role of the VPIC is to provide the people of Victoria with a timely, safe information service in poisonings and suspected poisoning, for members of the public this includes telephone assessment, advice on first aid, with or without referral to a doctor or hospital. Information is given to health professionals about formulations of products and management of poisoned patients.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

Bites and Stings web resource, Victorian Poisons Information Centre, Austin Hospital

www.austin.org.au

Australian Venom Research Institute, University of Melbourne www.avru.org

Bushwalking Victoria Snakebite web resource www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au

Service Policies

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy
- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Excursions, Incursions and Special Events Policy
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Curriculum Development Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy



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- Sun Protection Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy
- Water Safety Policy
- Bush Kinder Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- Bush Kinder Extreme Weather Policy
- Bush Kinder Emergency Evacuation Policy
- Bush Kinder Identification and Visibility Policy
- Bush Kinder Protective Clothing Policy
- Bush Kinder Dog Awareness Policy

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Supplying a First Aid Kit on site at Antonio Park at all times to administer first aid in response to snake bites or for any other necessary purpose which includes pressure immobilisation bandages for medical treatment of snake bites
- Ensuring staff are appropriately educated on procedures to prevent snake bites and to deliver First Aid in response to a snake bite
- Following all procedures as set out in the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy (including notice of notifiable incidents, appropriate record keeping in the event of an incident, maintaining first aid kits etc)
- Ensuring that all parents/guardians are aware of this policy and are provided access to the policy at orientation sessions, in written Bush Kinder material and on the Pre-School Website, and made available upon request
- Bringing any relevant issues to attention of the Committee and/or Whitehorse Council in a timely manner

The Nominated Supervisor or Persons in Day to Day Charge, Educators and other staff are responsible for:

- Practicing and educating children on snake bite prevention behaviours whilst at Bush Kinder, without fostering an unnatural fear of paranoia of snakes. This includes practicing and highlighting the following key points:
 - always leave snakes alone
 - wear adequate clothing and stout shoes (not sandals or thongs) in ‘snake country’
 - never put hands in hollow logs or thick grass without prior inspection
 - when stepping over logs, carefully inspect the ground on the other side

(Source: Victorian Poisons Information Centre, Austin Health)
- Ensure children are reminded on a regular basis that if they encounter a snake, to move away quietly and report the sighting immediately to a teacher
- In the event that a snake is encountered at Bush Kinder, calmly move children away from the snake (staff must not attempt to touch or harm the snake)
- Administering first aid in the event of a snake bite

First aid for snake bite (source: Victorian Poisons Information Centre, Austin Health, and Australian venom Research Institute, Melbourne University)

 - Stay calm and call for help. Have someone phone an ambulance. If unable to phone, send someone for help



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- Reassure the patient and encourage them to remain calm and still. Do not move the patient
- Do not attempt to catch or kill the snake
- Do not wash the bite. Traces of venom that are left on the skin can be used to identify the snake, and therefore the type of anti-venom that should be used if required
- Venom is injected deeply so there is no benefit in cutting or sucking the bite. A tourniquet is not an effective way to restrict venom movement
- The most effective first aid for a snake bite is the pressure immobilisation technique. (refer Attachment 1 for instructions on the application of this technique). The principle is to minimise the movement of the venom around the body until the victim is in a hospital by applying a firm bandage (or suitable alternative) to the bitten area and limb, and to immobilise the victim. When applied properly, this method can trap the venom in the bitten area for many hours. The victim might not suffer any effects of the venom until the compression is released, which is done in hospital where anti-venom can be administered if required
- Staff are to follow procedures as set out in the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy, including contacting parents, calling an ambulance etc.
- Reminding parents/guardians of the policy content as required

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Reading and familiarising themselves with this policy
- Bringing any relevant issues to the attention of both Kinder staff and the committee

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

EVALUATION

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

- Seek feedback regarding this policy and its implementation with parents/guardians of children participating in the Bush Kinder program. This can be facilitated through discussions, surveys and the Pre-School newsletter
- Ask staff to share their experiences and observations in relation to the effectiveness of this policy
- Review the first aid procedures following an incident to determine their effectiveness
- Regularly review the policy and Pre-School practices to ensure they are compliant with any new legislation, research or best practice procedures
- Revisit the policy and procedures in light of the above as part of the service's policy review cycle, or earlier if required
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to the policy or its procedures (Regulation 172 of the National Regulations) unless a shorter period is necessary due to a perceived or actual risk.



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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Pressure Immobilisation Technique (detailed instructions with diagram on application of this technique in the event of a snake bite). Source: Australian Venom Research Institute, Melbourne University

AUTHORISATION

The policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Rangeview Pre-School on 7th October 2015.

REVIEW

DATE	NEXT REVIEW DATE
19 Sep 2022	19 Apr 2023

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ATTACHMENT 1

Pressure Immobilisation Technique (detailed instructions with diagram on application of this technique in the event of a snake bite).

Source: Australian Venom Research Institute, Melbourne University

The principle of pressure immobilisation bandaging as a first aid measure is to prevent the spread of toxins through the body. This is done by applying enough pressure to compress the lymph vessels, and by preventing movement of the affected limb. Correct application of the technique can buy valuable time to get the patient to medical assistance.

First Aid for Bites to the Lower Limb

	<p>As soon as possible, apply a broad pressure bandage from below the bite site, upward on the affected limb (starting at the fingers or toes, bandaging upward as far as possible). Leave the tips of the fingers or toes unbandaged to allow the victim's circulation to be checked. Do not remove pants or trousers, simply bandage over the top of the clothing.</p>
	<p>Bandage firmly as for a sprained ankle, but not so tight that circulation is prevented. Continue to bandage upward from the lower portion of the bitten limb</p>
	<p>Apply the bandage as far up the limb as possible to compress the lymphatic vessels.</p>

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	<p>It is vital to now apply a splint. Bind a stick or suitable rigid item over the initial bandage to splint the limb. Secure the splint to the bandaged limb by using another bandage, (if another bandage is not available, use clothing strips or similar to bind). It is very important to keep the bitten limb still.</p>
	<p>Bind the splint firmly, to as much of the limb as possible, to prevent muscle, limb and joint movement. This will help restrict venom movement. Seek urgent medical assistance now that first aid has been applied.</p>

First Aid for Bites on the Hand or Forearm

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 As soon as possible, apply a broad pressure bandage from the fingers of the affected arm, bandaging upward as far as possible. Bandage the arm with the elbow in a bent position, to ensure the victim is comfortable with their arm in a sling. Leave the tips of the fingers unbandaged to allow the victim's circulation to be checked. 2 Bind a splint along the forearm. 3 Use a sling to further prevent limb movement.
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