



BUSH KINDER STRANGER AWARENESS POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

This policy aims to clearly define:

- Ways in which Bush Kinder participants are clearly visible to staff and volunteers, and clearly identifiable to other users of Yarran Dheran Nature Reserve to protect the safety of all participants
- The manner in which the Bush Kinder is marked and signed to enable identification by users of Yarran Dheran Nature Reserve and to communicate some key messages to optimise the Bush Kinder program and experience
- Means in which children are taught to be safe in Yarran Dheran, to be aware of strangers, and to be self-protective

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 the community space that the Bush Kinder site offers, while ensuring the safety of participants at all times in response to external influences and risks
- Being respectful that members of the public may be interested in the Bush Kinder program, but ensuring that the children are not interrupted or disturbed by other park users
- Raising awareness within the Bush Kinder groups (and Pre-School in general) of stranger awareness and protective behaviours
- Maintaining a duty of care to all children and users of the Bush Kinder program

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day to Day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Rangeview Pre-School Bush Kinder.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Rangeview Pre-School's Bush Kinder Program is conducted in community parkland which is open to members of the public; people that are unfamiliar and not known to the children. Therefore, it is important that the children, staff and volunteers of Bush Kinder feel safe and respected at all times, as is their right, and as such, are taught how to recognise uncomfortable or difficult feelings and situations, and subsequent self-protective behaviour strategies.

Teaching protective behaviours or stranger danger is a delicate balance of raising awareness, without unnecessarily alarming children.

Legislation and standards

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, 97, 98, 136, 137(1)(e), 168(2)(a),
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

BUSH KINDER STRANGER AWARENESS POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

- *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/
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.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.

Protective behaviours: is a safety awareness and resilience building program that helps children and adults to recognise any situation where they feel worried or unsafe, such as feeling stressed, bullied or threatened and explores practical ways to keep safe.

Stranger: a stranger is anyone that your child or family doesn't know well. It's common for children to think that strangers look scary, like villains in cartoons. Not only is this not true, but it's dangerous for children to think this way. Pretty strangers can be just as dangerous as the not-so-pretty ones. When talking to children about strangers, explain that no one can tell if strangers are nice or not nice just by looking at them and that they should be careful around all strangers.

Safe Stranger/Trusted Adult: safe strangers are people children can ask for help when they need it. Police officers and firefighters are two examples of very recognisable safe strangers. Teachers, principals, and librarians are adults children can trust too, and they are easy to recognise when they're at work. Teachers will wear hi-visibility orange vests for children to recognise them as a safe person.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Service policies

- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Excursions, Incursions and Special Events Policy
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Curriculum Development Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- 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 Fauna and Flora Awareness Policy
- Bush Kinder Identification and Visibility Policy
- Bush Kinder Protective Clothing Policy
- Bush Kinder Dog Awareness Policy
- Bush Kinder Snake Awareness Policy
- Bush Kinder Play Benefit Policy
- Bush Kinder Fauna and Flora Awareness Policy

BUSH KINDER STRANGER AWARENESS POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Providing appropriate signage for the Bush Kinder site
- Providing appropriate identifiable wristbands/vests as detailed in this policy for Bush Kinder participants
- Ensuring staff are appropriately trained in procedures for dealing with unknown persons and visitors to the site
- 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

The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day to Day Charge and all other Educators are responsible for:

- Placing bush kinder signage as detailed in this policy in the appropriate places at the Bush Kinder site
- Ensuring all Bush Kinder participants are wearing identifiable vests
- Requesting, very diplomatically, that interested onlookers move on so as not to disturb or upset the children, volunteers or staff
- Ensuring the children are educated in being “Stranger Aware” in the Bush Kinder setting:
 - Point out safe places – show children safe places to play and paths to take and being with the teacher is the safest place
 - Remind children never to leave the Yarran Dheran Visitor Centre or bushland unless they are with a teacher or someone you’ve said they can go with
 - Tell the children that they should never talk to anyone over or through a fence
 - If a stranger tries to talk to them they should run to a teacher
 - Teach children not to wander off or go out of sight of a teacher
 - Remind children to always walk with and stay where their teacher can see them– never leave the group to go off alone
- Teaching Protective Behaviours principles to the children:
 - Children have the right to feel safe all the time. Help them understand what “safe” and unsafe” mean, and that they feel like
 - Teach children to recognise and name emotions and feelings, and to share this information. Let them know nothing is so awful that it can’t be talked about with someone
 - Teach children to be wary of potentially dangerous situations. Help them recognise the warning signs of suspicious behaviour
 - Teach children to be assertive – make sure they know its ok to say no to an adult and to run to their teacher in dangerous situations. An example of this is “No, Go, Yell, Tell” - if children find themselves in an uncomfortable situation, they should say no, run to their teacher, yell as loud as they can and tell a teacher what happened right away
 - Help them understand the concepts of personal space and privacy
 - Teach children to trust their instincts – explain if they ever feel scared or uncomfortable, they should get away as fast as they can and tell a trusted adult. Reassure children that you will help them when they need it
 - Help them understand the concepts of personal space and privacy
 - Supervise the children as much as possible, while also letting them safely discover and explore
- Ensuring all participants are wearing identifiable vests



BUSH KINDER STRANGER AWARENESS POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

- Notifying parents/guardians and relevant authorities immediately if an incident occurs, or as soon as is practicable (as per the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy)
- Recording details of any incident in the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record as soon as is practicable but not later than 24 hours after the occurrence (as per the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy)

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Reading and familiarising themselves with this policy
- Reiterating stranger awareness teachings and protective behaviours with their children at home, keeping in mind:
 - Practice makes perfect – role playing etc
 - Non-stranger danger / body safety awareness
 - A healthy balance – keep danger in balance. While being alert and pro-active with protective behaviours, remember that a child's world is full of safe, wonderful and positive events
- 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
- Notifying 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

AUTHORISATION

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



BUSH KINDER STRANGER AWARENESS POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

REVIEW

DATE	NEXT REVIEW DATE (2 YEARLY)
Apr 2020	Apr 2022
Oct 2023	Oct 2025