



BUSH KINDER PROGRAM: EXTREME WEATHER POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy aims to:

Provide a framework around which well-informed decisions may be made by Gum Nut Gully Preschool to cancel bush kinder session/s in response to forecast weather conditions, and ensure that parents/guardians understand this framework

Ensure the health and safety of all children and staff when the weather conditions become extreme during a session

Provide guidelines for staff in the event of extreme weather during a Bush Kinder session

Provide an appropriate mechanism for communication of session cancellations in extreme weather conditions

Impress upon parents/guardians that they may collect their child from a Bush Kinder session at any time in response to the weather conditions (or for any other reason).

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Gum Nut Gully Preschool 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 a spectrum as possible and without compromising the safety of the participants

Accessing appropriate resources to enable well-informed determinations to be made regarding weather conditions

Facilitating effective and timely communication to parents and guardians regarding weather conditions, cancellations or relocation of children in the event of extreme weather

Respecting the right of parents/guardians to remove their child from a Bush Kinder session at any time in response to the weather conditions (or for any other reason).

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to children, parents/guardians, staff, committee members, authorised persons, volunteers and students on placement working at Gum Nut Gully Preschool.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Gum Nut Gully Preschool's Bush Kinder program is intended to operate across a broad spectrum of weather conditions, allowing the 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. However, extreme weather conditions may arise periodically which can put the wellbeing and safety of the children and staff at risk. This policy provides the parameters within which the kindergarten can make determinations to cancel bush kinder sessions in response to forecast extreme weather conditions and ensure appropriate communication channels are in place to inform participants. It also provides a framework for staff in the event that extreme weather conditions arise during a session and provides procedures for effective evacuation to a safe location.

Relevant legislation includes but is not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Law 2010 (Vic);
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

4. DEFINITIONS

Bureau of Meteorology: Australia's national weather, climate and water agency. Website www.bom.gov.au various iphone/ipad apps use BOM data (e.g. Pocket Weather)

Bush Kinder Mobile Phone: Phone to be turned on, within hearing capabilities and on an educator at all times whilst the Bush Kinder Session is taking place (including the walk back to Gum Nut Gully Preschool).

Extreme Weather: weather that threatens the immediate or long-term safety of individuals, as a result of rain, lightning, wind or heat. The risk to individuals' wellbeing is guided by the Bureau of Meteorology's forecast conditions. An extreme weather table is shown below. Bush Kinder sessions will be cancelled if any of these determinants are met:

Weather Condition Extreme: weather that threatens the immediate or long-term safety of individuals, as a result of rain, lightning, wind or heat. The risk to individuals' wellbeing is guided by the Bureau of Meteorology's forecast conditions. An extreme weather table is shown below. Bush Kinder sessions will be cancelled if any of these determinants are met.

<u>Weather condition</u>	<u>Extreme weather determinant causing cancellation of Bush Kinder Session</u>
Forecast Temperature	BOM forecasted temperature above 35 degrees at midday on the day of the session. Thermals and clothing layers should be worn on very cold days (refer to Bush Kinder Program: Protective Clothing Policy)
Forecast wind speed	> 45km per hour and the educators decide that it would be appropriate to cancel the session.
Forecast of electrical storm activity	Thunder storm/electrical storm forecast
Forecast of hail or torrential rain	Heavy hail or torrential rain predicted
Forecast fire risk	Total Fire Ban days

In addition to the above, the 4yo kindergarten teacher in charge of the Bush Kinder Session has the discretion to cancel a session if they view the weather to be poor for Bush Kinder purposes, even if the extreme weather determinants in the above table are not reached. Weather warnings from the Bureau of Meteorology for the area would also necessitate cancellation. Further, the Manningham City Council Park Ranger has the authority to override the Gum Nut Gully Preschool's Committee's determination on safety and request cancellation of a session should he or she consider the Bush Kinder site be unsafe.

Protective Clothing:

Refer to Protective Clothing Policy

5. SOURCES AND RELATED CENTRE POLICIES

Sources Victorian Government 'Better Health Channel Website Centre Policies

Bush Kinder Program - Protective Clothing Policy

Bush Kinder Program - Emergency Evacuation Policy

Bush Kinder Program - Play Benefit and Risk Policy

Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy

Excursions and Service Events Policy

PROCEDURES

General

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

An Extreme Weather Policy which gives clear guidelines to staff and parents about extreme conditions that will necessitate cancellation of a bush kinder session/s and provides guidance and procedures for staff in the event of extreme weather during a Bush Kinder session

All parents/guardians being aware of this policy and are provided access to the policy upon request.

The Four Year Old Kindergarten Teacher in Charge on the Day of the Bush Kinder Sessions is responsible for:

Ensuring that the Bush Kinder Mobile Phone is charged and is able to broadcast SMS all parents of children in a session, and receive/make calls at all times;

Monitoring the weather forecast via the Bureau of Meteorology website (or via mobile phone app) the day prior to the Bush Kinder session;

Making a determination to cancel based on the weather forecast - in cases of forecast Extreme Weather (see definition above), the 4yo educator in charge of the Bush Kinder Session will make the decision to cancel the Bush Kinder program for the session/s affected;

In addition to the Extreme Weather determinants detailed in the table under 'Definitions', the 4yo educator in charge of the Bush Kinder Session has the discretion to cancel the session if it views the weather to be unsuitable for Bush Kinder purposes. The Manningham Council Park Ranger also has the authority to request that the Centre cancel a session due to extreme weather conditions at the site as stated above.

AND IF THE SESSION IS CANCELLED, notifying parents **via Storypark alert by 8.10am** on the day of the session if Bush Kinder is to be cancelled. If cancelled, the Kindergarten session will therefore take place at Gum Nut Gully Preschool on that day;

Note that a bush kinder session may be cancelled at short notice or any other time by broadcast SMS from the Bush Kinder Mobile Phone based on updated weather information.

The Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor and all other Bush Kinder Staff are responsible for:

Keeping the Bush Kinder Mobile Phone charged, turned on, within hearing capabilities and on an educator at all times whilst the Bush Kinder Session is taking place (including the walk back to Gum Nut Gully Preschool);

Checking their mobile phone on the day of bush kinder sessions to receive notice of cancellation in cases of extreme weather updates which necessitate cancellation;

Ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of this policy as part of their induction

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

Ensuring they are comfortable at all times with the forecast weather conditions, while their child is attending a Bush Kinder session. If, for whatever reason, a parent/guardian feels concern for the wellbeing of their child due to the weather conditions, they should consider withholding their child from the session and/or collect their child from a session in the event that extreme weather arises during a session.

Ensuring protective clothing is worn by their child to suit the weather conditions and ensure a change of clothes is provided (Refer to Bush Kinder Program: Protective Clothing Policy)

Reading and being familiar with the policy

Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and Committee

IN THE EVENT OF WEATHER BECOMING EXTREME DURING A SESSION

Bush Kinder Staff are responsible for:

Undertaking the following actions in the each of the weather conditions listed in the table below:

Weather condition	Staff actions
<p>Heat Risks</p> <p><i>include sunburn, heat stress, heat stroke, dehydration</i></p>	<p>Monitor children for heat exhaustion/heat stroke in accordance with the signs/symptoms and treatments set out in the Level 2 (HLTFA311A) First Aid Training all staff have undertaken.</p> <p>Offer water for hydration at regular intervals</p> <p>Establish activities in shaded areas and encourage children to play in the shade</p> <p>Ensure application of sunscreen every two hours</p> <p>Ensure appropriate protective clothing including hats. (Refer to Bush Kinder Program: Protective Clothing Policy for more information)</p>
<p>Rain/Hail/Cold</p> <p><i>Risks include child getting wet (and onset of hypothermia), injury from hailstones</i></p>	<p>Monitor children for wet clothing and change if necessary (with assistance of volunteers)</p> <p>Ensure appropriate clothing is worn (e.g., waterproof clothing, gloves)</p> <p>Encourage wearing of appropriate clothing, including coats, gloves, scarves etc</p>

	Where necessary undertaking the emergency evacuation procedures as set out in the Bush Kinder Program: Emergency Evacuation Policy
Electrical storm activity/lightning <i>Risks include lightning strike, trees/tree limbs falling as a result of lightning strike</i>	Move children away from trees Evacuate in accordance with the emergency evacuation procedures as set out in the Bush Kinder Program: Emergency Evacuation Policy. See Attachment 1 for First Aid Recommendations for Lightning Victims
High winds <i>Risks include falling trees/tree limbs, blowing particles (sand dirt) into eyes, Bush Kinder structures blowing down/away etc.</i>	Ensure structures and dangerous items are secure ; Move children away from trees; Evacuate in accordance with the emergency evacuation procedures as set out in the Bush Kinder Program: Emergency Evacuation Policy

In the event of illness or injury during a session as a result of weather conditions, the Administration of First Aid Policy and the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy and Bush Kinder Program: Emergency Evacuation Policy must be followed.

Contacting parent/guardian in the event that a child is ill or injured in accordance with the Administration of First Aid Policy and the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy

Session cancellation: If a bush kinder session is cancelled mid session due to extreme weather, parents/guardians will be contacted via SMS from the kinder mobile phone and will be able to collect their children in accordance with the Bush Kinder Program: Delivery and Collection Policy. For those children that are unable to be collected, they will be walked back to Gum Nut Gully Preschool at a safe time, via a safe route in accordance with the Bush Kinder Program: Emergency Evacuation Policy.

Parents/guardians are responsible for: Collecting their child at any time during the session if they are not comfortable with the weather conditions.

Procedures for relocating to a Safe Position: Relocate the session in accordance with the Bush Kinder Program: Emergency Evacuation Policy.



EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the Committee of Management will:

Where deemed appropriate, encourage feedback regarding this policy and its implementation with parents/guardians of children participating in the Bush Kinder program.

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.

Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any substantial changes to this policy, which would impact on the supervision and care of children.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: First Aid Recommendations for Lightning Victims.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was approved by the Gum Nut Gully Preschool Committee of Management on 22/03/2022 and will be due for review annually.

ATTACHMENT 1 –

FIRST AID RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LIGHTNING VICTIMS

Source: Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
(<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/lightning/firstaid.asp>)

HOW TO HELP

Giving first aid to lightning strike victims while waiting for professional medical attention can save their lives. It is safe to touch a lightning strike victim. People struck by lightning DO NOT carry a charge.

Follow these four steps immediately to help save the life of a lightning strike victim:

1. Call for Help Call 000 immediately.

Give directions to your location and information about the strike victim(s) (i.e. how many victims are there, where was the victim struck, is the storm still continuing). It is safe to use a mobile phone during a storm.

2. Assess the Situation Safety is a priority.

Be aware of the continuing lightning danger to both the victim and rescuer. If the area where the victim is located is high risk (e.g., an isolated tree or open field), the victim and rescuer could both be in danger. If necessary, move the victim to a safer location. It is unusual for a victim who survives a strike to have any major broken bones that would cause paralysis or major bleeding complications unless the person suffered a fall or was thrown a long distance. Therefore, it may be safe to move the victim to minimize possible further exposure to lightning.

3. Respond Lightning may cause cardiac arrest.

Commence cardiopulmonary resuscitation if required following the Basic life support guidelines.

D danger

R responsiveness

S send for help

A open airway

B ? Normal Breathing

C start CPR 30 compressions : 2 breaths

D attach defibrillator (AED) as soon as available and follow its prompts

Continue resuscitation efforts until help arrives. If the area is cold and wet, putting a protective layer between the victim and the ground may help decrease hypothermia (abnormally low body temperature).

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Lightning may also cause other injuries such as burns, shock, and sometimes blunt trauma. Treat each of these injuries with basic first aid until help arrives. Do not move victims who are bleeding or appear to have broken bones.