



BUSH KINDER PROGRAM : PROTECTIVE CLOTHING POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clearly provide:

Guidelines for parents/guardians and staff regarding appropriate clothing to be worn by children attending Bush Kinder in various weather conditions to ensure their safety and wellbeing (including a description of clothing which should not be worn);

Guidelines regarding the change of clothes requirements for Bush Kinder participants;

Appropriate mechanisms for communication of the protective clothing requirements for Bush Kinder sessions to parents/guardians.

POLICY STATEMENT

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

Ensuring clothing worn by children in the program allows for free movement and does not obstruct the children in their activities in the Bush Kinder setting, through assisting them in remaining comfortable.

Facilitating communication to parents and guardians to ensure compliance with this policy

SCOPE

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

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Gum Nut Gully Preschool'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 requirements in a centre-based environment.

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
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007
- Occupational Health and Safety Compliance Codes,
- First Aid in the Workplace (2008)

DEFINITIONS

Protective and Appropriate Clothing & Footwear:

It is important that Bush Kinder participants wear appropriate and protective clothing and footwear which:

- allows children to move freely and undertake activities such as climbing, balancing, running

- keeps children warm and dry in cold/wet weather

- protects children from the damaging effects of the sun, UV rays in warm weather and high UV conditions.

- prevents sunburn, bites, scratches and stings (even in warm weather, long sleeve tops and long pants are recommended - this clothing should be loose fitting and light).

- Where possible is made from natural fabrics which allow the body to breathe and is comfortable against the skin

- In the case of footwear, staff have deemed gumboots to be the most appropriate footwear considering the awareness of snakes in the vicinity

The following table provides examples of recommended clothing, clothing which is not recommended and unacceptable clothing:

	Warm weather	Cold weather/ rain
Recommended clothing and footwear	Light, loose-fitting long sleeved tops and long pants, *broad brimmed hat, Gumboots	Waterproof long pants, long sleeved top, beanie, water proof rain jacket, thermals in very cold weather, waterproof shoes i.e. gumboots



Not recommended	Short-sleeved tops, long skirts or dresses, shorts	Skirts, dresses (incompatible with waterproofs).
Unacceptable <i>Note: Children will be unable to attend session</i>	Open toe shoes, sandals, thongs, crocs, singlet tops	Non-waterproof outer clothing. (The waterproofs on top of non waterproof clothing is required)

*Sun Smart hat: this hat is required to be worn when the UV is at 3 or above as per the Centre's Sun Protection Policy.

Change of Clothes: All children participating in Bush Kinder are required to bring a change of clothes and footwear as these may become wet and muddy. It is recommended that the spare clothing include:

- Spare top and bottoms of appropriate thickness/weight for the weather on the day
- Spare underpants (and singlet in winter)
- 2 pairs of socks
- 1 pair of shoes in your child's bag

The Bush Kinder 'on-site kit' will contain high vis vests for all children. It is a requirement that families supply a water proof jacket and waterproof pants on all bush kinder days.

SOURCES AND RELATED CENTRE POLICIES

Centre Policies

- Bush Kinder Program - Extreme Weather Policy
- Hygiene Policy
- Inclusion and Equity Policy
- Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy
- Sun Protection Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy
- Excursions and Service Events Policy

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

Implementing and maintaining this Protective Clothing Policy which provides clarity to parents/guardians and staff as to the appropriate clothing children are required to wear to Bush Kinder in various weather conditions to ensure their safety and wellbeing (including a description of clothing which should not be worn)

Ensuring parents/guardians are aware of this policy and are provided access to the policy at kinder orientation sessions, in written Bush Kinder material and on the Gum Nut Gully Preschool's website, and made available upon request.

Ensuring staff are appropriately educated on procedures in the event that children are not wearing compliant clothing

The Nominated Supervisor and Certified Supervisors are responsible for:

Ensuring all children being dropped off to Bush Kinder are wearing appropriate clothing in line with this policy.

If inappropriate clothing is worn, staff are to:

- a) Highlight to the parent/guardian dropping off the child which clothing is inappropriate and the reasons for it;
- b) Determine if the change of clothing brought by that child is appropriate and request the parent change the clothes on the child if need be;
- c) If the clothing has the potential to put the child's safety and wellbeing at risk and there is no suitable alternative clothing, refuse the child's entry to Bush Kinder session;

Checking children's clothing periodically (i.e. asking children if their clothes are wet as they can be absorbed in an activity and not take much notice), on wet days, and changing from the child's change of clothing if need be, including on return to the Centre;

Encouraging children to tell a staff member if they have wet clothing

During orientation sessions, advising parents/guardians of the clothing requirements for Bush Kinder

Ensuring that waterproof pants are ready for use and on site at all times.

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 staff 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 being familiar 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:

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 or care of children

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.