

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

1. VALUES

South Kingsville 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

2. SCOPE

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

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

South Kingsville 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)*

4. 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 and UV rays in warm weather and high UV conditions.
- prevents 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, keeps feet and toes covered and has a flexible sole to allow children to climb and balance on uneven surfaces

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, kinder-issued broad brimmed hat*, closed toe shoes	Waterproofs (supplied by South Kingsville Preschool at the Bush Kinder site), long pants, long sleeved top, beanie, , thermals in very cold weather, waterproof shoes i.e. gumboots, snow boots
Not recommended	Short-sleeved tops, long skirts or dresses, shorts	Skirts, dresses (incompatible with waterproofs).
Unacceptable clothing and footwear. Children unable to attend	Open toe shoes, sandals, thongs, crocs, singlet tops	Non-waterproof outer clothing. (The supplied waterproofs on top of non-waterproof clothing is required).

Kinder-issued 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*.

Waterproofs: Light rainproof suit worn over clothing, which includes a jacket with a hood,



BUSH KINDER: PROTECTIVE CLOTHING POLICY

and pants or overalls, which zip up over clothing (*supplied by South Kingsville Preschool on-site*).

Change of Clothes: All children participating in Bush Kinder are recommended 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

The Bush Kinder 'on-site kit' will contain Waterproofs for all children

5. 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 South Kingsville Preschool's website, and made available upon request.
- Supplying waterproofs.
- 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:

BUSH KINDER: PROTECTIVE CLOTHING POLICY

- 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 waterproofs 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.
- Ensuring 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.



BUSH KINDER: PROTECTIVE CLOTHING POLICY

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Committee of Management of South Kingsville Preschool at a committee meeting on 17th March 2020

REVIEW DATE: March 2023