

EXTREME WEATHER POLICY

(Bush Kindergarten specific)

NQS: Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

This policy aims to:

- Provide a framework around which well-informed decisions may be made by Kunyung Preschool to cancel Bush Kinder session/s in response to forecast weather conditions, and to 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 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

Kunyung 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 communications to parents and guardians regarding weather conditions, cancellations or relocation of children in the event of extreme weather;
- Respecting the rights 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, staff, committee members, authorised persons, volunteers and students on placement working at Elonera Preschool.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Kunyung 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 natural environment. However, extreme weather conditions may arise periodically which can put the well-being and safety of the children, staff and volunteer helpers 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:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (National Law)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (The Regulations)
- *National Quality Standard*, including Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety

4. DEFINITIONS

Bureau of Meteorology: Australia’s national weather, climate and water agency.

Website: www.bom.gov.au

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 determinant causing cancellation
Forecast Temperature	33 degrees Celsius or greater. Note: there is no pre-set minimum temperature. Thermals and clothing layers should be worn on very cold days. (Refer Protective Clothing Policy).
Forecast wind speed	>35km per hour
Forecast of electrical storm activity	Thunder storm/electrical storm forecast
Grounds flooded near or at Bush Kinder site	On inspection by Bush Kinder educators
BOM weather warnings of extreme storm conditions and excessive rainfall	On warning issued by the Bureau of Meteorology.

In addition to the above, Kunyung Preschool has the discretion to cancel a session/s if it views 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.

Protective Clothing: Refer to Bush Kinder Protective Clothing Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)

5. SOURCES AND RELATED CENTRE POLICIES

Victorian Government “Better Health Channel” website

Kindergarten policies

- Protective Clothing (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Emergency Evacuation (Bush Kinder Specific)
- Incident and medical emergency management
- Communication
- Excursions and centre events.

PROCEDURES - GENERAL

Kunyang Preschool 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
- provide guidance and procedure 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 on request;
- Regardless of the weather forecast, a **Flexibuzz notification will confirm the running or cancellation of the days Bush Kinder session by 7.30am** and should also include the weather forecast information to allow parents to decide whether they are comfortable with the weather conditions. (additional responsibilities in the event of extreme weather, see “In the event of Forecast Extreme Weather” below);
- Ensuring communication channels are in place to facilitate notification to parents/guardians in the event of cancellation of a Bush Kinder session or if the group has been evacuated to a safe location in response to extreme weather.

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 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. If a change in weather conditions causes a parent concern during a Bush Kinder session, they are able to collect their child at any time.
- Ensuring that clothing to suit the weather conditions is always worn and that a change of clothes is provided (including shoes.) (Refer to Protective Clothing Policy).
- Parents must ensure they carry a mobile phone with them at all times while the Bush Kinder session is in progress. Mobile phones must be kept turned on at all times during a Bush Kinder session. Where a mobile is not available, an alternative reliable contact number must be supplied.
- Reading and being familiar with the policy.
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee.
- Accessing Flexibuzz for the status of the session by 8am or start of session, on the day of the session.

In the event of weather becoming extreme during a session:

Staff are responsible for:

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

Weather Conditions	Staff Actions
<p>Heat Risks include sunburn, heat stress, heat stroke and dehydration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor children for heat exhaustion/heat stroke (see Attachment 1 for symptoms and treatments.) • Offer water for hydration at regular intervals • Establish activities in shaded areas and encourage children to play in the shade • Ensure application of sunscreen by parents at the start of the session • Ensure appropriate protective clothing, including hats (Refer Protective Clothing Policy.)

<p>Rain/Hail/Cold Risks include child getting wet (and onset of hypothermia) Injury from hailstones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor children for wet clothes and change if necessary. • Ensure appropriate wet weather clothing is worn. • Encourage wearing of appropriate clothing, including gloves, scarves, beanies etc. • Seek shelter in heavy rain or in hail (See Attachment 3 - Relocation Procedures below.)
<p>Electrical storm activity/Lightning Risks include lightning strike, trees/tree limbs falling as a result of lightning strike</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move children away from trees • Seek undercover shelter (See Relocation Procedure below) • See Attachment 2 – Lightning Safety Fact Sheet
<p>High Winds Risks include falling trees/tree limbs, blowing particles (sand, dirt) into eyes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure structures and dangerous items are secure • Move children away from trees • Seek shelter if necessary (See Attachment 3 - Relocation Procedures below) • If the Bush Kinder site is to be changed, follow the “Relocating to a safe position” instructions below.

- Following the Illness Policy and Incident and Medical Emergency Management Policy in the event of illness or injury during a session as a result of weather conditions;
- Contacting parent/guardian in the event that a child is ill or injured in accordance with the Illness Policy and Incident and Medical Emergency Management Policy.

In the event of the forecast of extreme or bad weather:

In the case of forecast of extreme weather (see definition above) Konyung Preschool will make the decision to cancel the Bush Kinder program for the session affected.

In addition to extreme weather determinants detailed in the table under “Definitions”, the Konyung Preschool Committee of Management has the discretion to cancel the session if it views the weather to be unsuitable for Bush Kinder purposes.

If Bush Kinder is cancelled, the kinder session will be held at the PreSchool, 44 Barmah Street, Mount Eliza

Staff are responsible for:

Monitoring the weather forecast via the Bureau of Meteorology website the day prior to the session

- Making a determination to cancel or conduct the Bush Kinder session on the following day based on the weather forecast
- Providing notice to parents/guardians/staff of the status of the Bush Kinder session as follows;
 - by 6pm the day before the session
 - or by Flexibuzz 7.30am on the day of the session, or by the start of the session
- This notice will confirm the running or cancellation of the Bush Kinder session and should include the weather forecast information to allow parents to decide whether they are comfortable with the weather conditions.
- **Note that a Bush Kinder session may be cancelled at short notice or at any other time by Flexibuzz or broadcast SMS based on updated weather information.**

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Collecting their child at any time during the session if they are not comfortable with the weather conditions.
- Accessing the Kunyung Preschool Flexibuzz for a weather forecast after 7.30 am on the day of the session;
- Keeping their mobile phone with them on the day of the session to receive notice of cancellation in cases of extreme weather updates which necessitate cancellation.

Procedures for Relocating to a Safe Position – Relocation Safe Zones

Weather conditions	Shelter Location
Hail, torrential rain, electrical storm, lightning, extreme winds	Seek shelter at the Camp Manyung designated safe shelter area

If conditions necessitate evacuation from the Bush Kinder Site or YMCA Camp Manyung , follow the procedures in the Emergency Evacuation Policy (Bush Kinder Specific).

If the Bush Kinder group is required to relocate to a safe position in response to changed weather conditions, the following procedures are to be followed by staff (with the assistance of volunteer helpers).

- 1) Blow whistle
- 2) Reassure children and maintain calm
- 3) Ensure sign-in sheet is in the teacher’s backpack along with other necessary items, such as medication
- 4) Count/check off against the sign-in sheet to ensure all children are accounted for
- 5) With the exception of the teacher’s backpack, leave Bush Kinder gear at the site for collection later when it is safe to do so.
- 6) En route to new location (see above for appropriate location), calmly walk children in pairs, keep group close together and ensure no child deviates from the group.
- 7) Teachers/adult volunteers to be positioned at the front and back of the group, and flanking the group where possible.
- 8) Notify Emergency Services if required.
- 9) On arrival at safe assembly point, conduct a full count/roll call to ensure all children are accounted for
- 10) Wait for the extreme weather to pass and when it does, resume normal activities, following same relocation procedures to return to the Bush Kinder site.
- 11) If the weather does not look like it will pass soon, a broadcast Flexibuzz message should be sent to all parents, advising of the new safe location for pick up purposes.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the committee of management will:

- Seek feedback regarding this policy and its implementation with parents of children participating in the Bush Kinder program. This can be facilitated through discussions and the annual centre survey.
- 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.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Better Health Channel- Heat Exhaustion and Heat stroke – Symptoms and Treatments.

Attachment 2: Lightning Action Guide and First Aid Guidelines

Attachment 3: Bush Kinder sight map showing safe relocation zones in the event of extreme weather.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Kunyung Pre School Committee of Management on **15 May 2018**

REVIEW DATE

This policy will be reviewed every 2nd year and is next due for formal Committee review in **2020**, unless deemed necessary earlier.

ATTACHMENT 1:

Better Health Channel - Heat Exhaustion and Heat stroke – Symptoms and Treatments.

Heat stress occurs when the body becomes dehydrated and is unable to cool itself enough to maintain a healthy temperature. If left untreated, this can lead to heat stroke, which is a life-threatening medical emergency.

Prevention is the best way to avoid heat stroke.

People most at risk of heat stroke

Anyone can suffer from heat stroke, but those most at risk are:

- People over 65 years, particularly those living alone or without air conditioning
- Babies and young children
- Pregnant and nursing mothers
- People who have existing medical conditions, especially with heart disease, high blood pressure or lung disease
- People on medications for mental illness.

Heat stroke can cause organ damage or death

Heat stroke occurs when the core body temperature rises above 40.5C and the body's internal systems start to shut down. Normally, sweating helps to maintain a healthy body temperature by increasing heat loss through evaporation. When a person becomes dehydrated, they do not sweat as much, their blood becomes concentrated and organ functioning is impaired.

Many organs in the body can suffer tissue damage and the body temperature must be reduced quickly. Most people will have profound central nervous system changes such as delirium, coma and seizures. As well as effects on the nervous system, there can be liver, kidney, muscle and heart damage.

Causes of heat stress

People attending large events (concerts, dance parties or sporting events), working in hot and poorly ventilated or confined areas, or engaging in vigorous physical activity in hot weather are at increased risk of dehydration and heat stroke. Exposure to radiant heat from bushfires can cause rapid dehydration and heat-related illness. Bushfires usually occur on days of high temperature, which adds to the risk.

Some drugs, such as ecstasy and speed, also raise the body's temperature, while alcohol dehydrates the body.

Symptoms of heat stroke

Heat stroke may appear similar to heat exhaustion, but the skin may be dry with no sweating and the person's mental condition worsens. They may stagger, appear confused, fit, collapse and become unconscious.

Warning signs of heat stroke vary, but may include:

- Very high body temperature
- Red, hot, dry skin (no sweating)
- Dry swollen tongue
- Rapid pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness, confusion, nausea

- Collapse
- Eventual unconsciousness.

Preventing heat stroke

Suggestions for preventing heat stroke include:

- Drink plenty of water or other cool, non-alcoholic fluids. (Check with your doctor if you are on limited fluids or fluid pills.) Avoid drinking extremely cold liquids as they can cause stomach cramps.
- Avoid heavy exertion. Reduce physical activity and avoid vigorous exercise in hot weather. If activity is unavoidable, try to schedule activity for the cooler part of the day and rest often. Whenever possible, stay indoors or in the shade.
- Stay cool and keep air circulating around you. Use air conditioning if possible. If you don't have air conditioning, consider visiting an air-conditioned shopping centre or public library.
- Eat regular, light meals.
- Wear lightweight clothing.
- Take a cool shower, bath or sponge bath.
- Check on older, sick and frail people who may need help coping with the heat.
- Never leave anyone or pets in a closed parked car.

If you must be out in the heat:

- Limit outdoor activity to the coolest part of the day.
- Protect yourself from the sun and **'slip, slop, slap'** when outside by covering exposed skin, using sunscreen and wearing a hat. **'Seek'** shade and **'slide'** on some sunglasses.
- Rest regularly in the shade and drink fluids frequently.

Managing events or workplaces

If you are organising a large event or sports activity, managing workers in a hot environment or engaged in fire fighting:

- Develop and follow a heat stroke prevention plan.
- Don't rely on fans to cool people, unless there is adequate ventilation.
- Know the signs and symptoms of heat stroke and know how to respond.
- If drinks are confiscated from patrons at the entrances to large events (for security reasons), ensure there is plenty of free water available and easily accessible.

Heat stroke is a medical emergency

Every minute's delay in cooling a person with heat stroke increases the likelihood of permanent injury or death. Apply first aid and seek medical assistance immediately if you, or someone you are with, shows any sign of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

For more first aid information, visit the [St John Ambulance Australia website](http://www.stjohn.org.au).

What to do for heat stroke

If someone you are with develops heat stroke:

- Call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.
- While waiting for emergency medical help, get the person to a cool shady area and lay them down.
- Remove excess clothing and wet their skin with water or wrap in wet cloths, fanning continuously.
- Do not give the person fluids to drink.

- Position an unconscious person on their side and clear their airway.
- Monitor their body temperature where possible and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops below 38°C.
- Wait for the ambulance to urgently transport the person to hospital, where more intensive cooling and support can be given.
- If medical attention is delayed, seek further instructions from ambulance or hospital emergency staff.

Where to get help

- In an emergency, call triple zero (000)
- Emergency department of your nearest hospital
- Your doctor
- NURSE-ON-CALL Tel. 1300 60 60 24 – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)
- Maternal and Child Health Line, Victoria (24 hours) Tel. 132 229
- [St John Ambulance Australia](#) website

Things to remember

- Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency that can be avoided by following simple prevention measures.
- Older people, young children, pregnant or breastfeeding women, and people with heart disease, high blood pressure or lung disease are most at risk.
- During hot weather, drink plenty of fluids, stay indoors or in the shade, and avoid vigorous exercise.
- Seek urgent medical assistance if you or a family member show any signs of heat stroke.

ATTACHMENT 2

LIGHTNING ACTION GUIDE

BE PREPARED

- Keep a list of emergency numbers handy

ACT SAFE

If caught outdoors:

- Seek shelter in a hard top vehicle or solid building. Never shelter under a tree or a group of trees
- If far from shelter crouch down, don't lie flat
- If boating or swimming, leave the water immediately
- Avoid metal objects such as ladders, umbrellas, fences and clothes lines

If indoors:

- Disconnect computers, televisions and other electrical/electronic appliances
- Avoid using fixed line telephones unless essential
- Keep clear of windows
- Avoid metal fixtures, such as roofs, guttering, downpipes and taps

AFTER THE LIGHTNING

- Confirm location and safety of family members and immediate neighbours
- Check operation of essential household items and check fuse box for surge protection/fuse/circuit breaker impact

For further information contact your local State Emergency Services office. www.ses.vic.gov.au

FIRST AID RECOMMENDATION FOR LIGHTNING VICTIMS

Source: Department of Sport and Recreation, Government of Western Australia

Most lightning victims can survive their encounter with lightning, especially with timely medical treatment. Individuals struck by lightning do not carry a charge and are safe to touch in order to render treatment.

The following First Aid is recommended:

FIRST

- Call 000 or your nearest emergency service and provide directions and information about the likely number of victims.

RESPONSE

- The first tenet of emergency care is 'make no more casualties'. If the area where the victim is located is a high-risk area (mountain top, isolated tree, open field, golf course etc) with a continuing thunderstorm, the rescuers may be placing themselves in danger.

EVACUATION

- It is relatively unusual for victims who survive a lightning strike to have major fractures that would cause paralysis or major bleeding complications unless they have suffered a fall or been thrown a distance. As a result, in an active thunderstorm, the rescuer needs to choose whether evacuation from very high-risk areas to an area of lesser risk is warranted and should not be afraid to move a victim rapidly if necessary. Rescuers are cautioned to minimise their exposure to lightning as much as possible.

RESUSCITATION

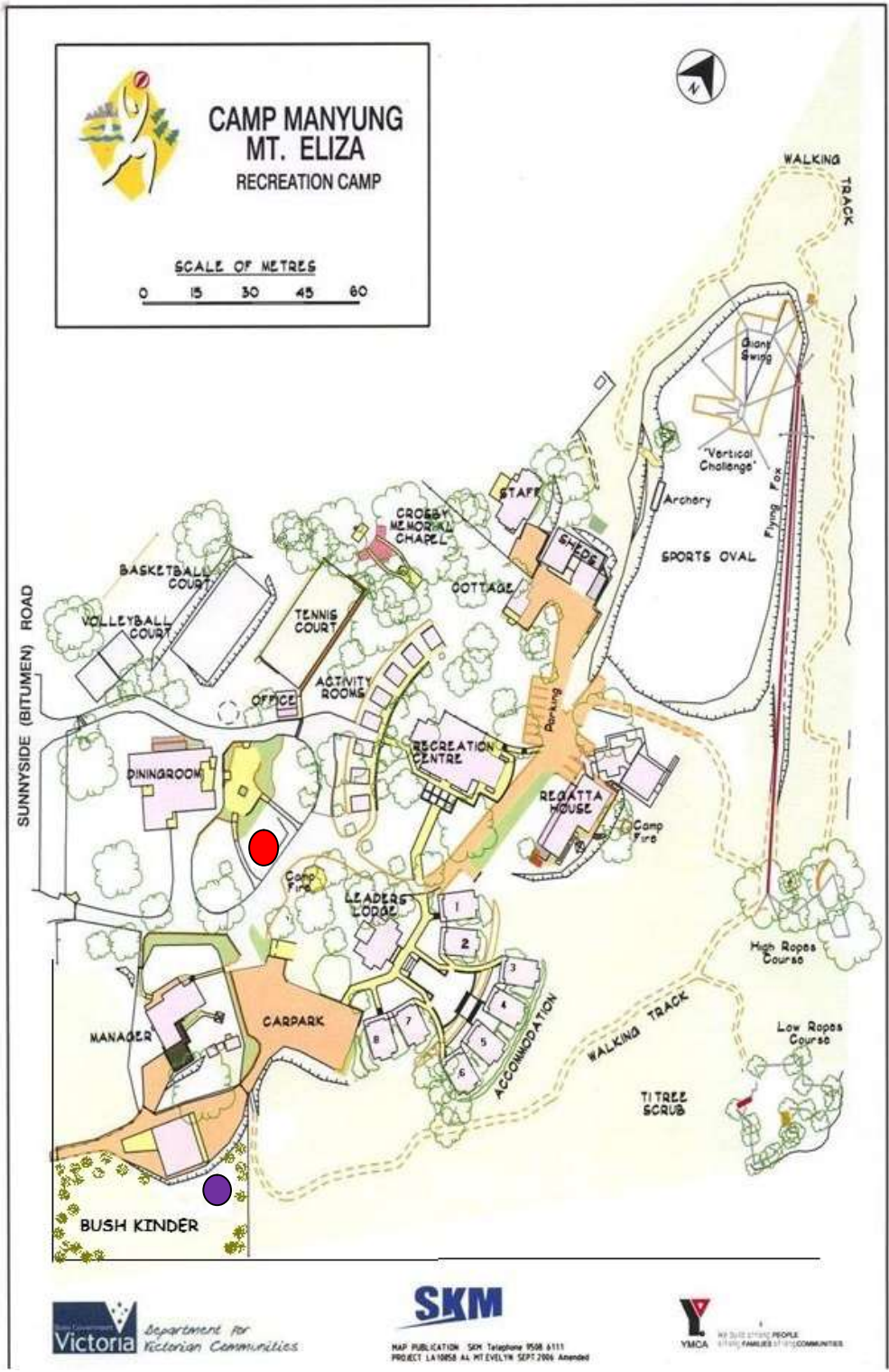
- The person stuck may be unconscious, disorientated, or unable to speak. The victim also may have stopped breathing. If they are not breathing, begin DRSABCD immediately and continue until medical attention arrives. If the victim is burnt or bleeding, apply appropriate first aid.

ATTACHMENT 3

Relocation Procedures

Procedures for Relocating to a Safe Position – Relocation Safe Zone

Weather conditions	Shelter Location
Hail, torrential rain, electrical storm, lightning, extreme winds	Seek shelter at the Camp Manyung designated safe shelter area



- Relocation Safe Zone
- Bush Kinder Base Site