



Waterfall Gully Pre- School Inc.
P.O. Box 261
Rosebud Victoria 3939



Waterfall Gully Preschool Nature Program Policy Booklet 2025



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NATURE PROGRAM DELIVERY AND COLLECTION POLICY

APPROVAL DATE
REVIEWED

May 2023

PURPOSE

This policy is a special circumstance policy, which augments the main Waterfall Gully Preschool Delivery & Collection of Children Policy and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

This Nature program policy details the specific delivery and collection requirements and procedures for children attending the Nature program. Only those requirements that are different to the main Waterfall Gully Pre -School Delivery and Collection of Children Policy are listed here.

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Waterfall Gully Preschool is committed to:

- Ensuring the safe delivery and collection of children participating in Nature program.
- Fulfilling a duty of care to all children participating in the Nature program

PROCEDURES

General

The Committee of Management is responsible for:

- Providing parents with information regarding the procedures for delivery and collection of their children to Nature program, and a



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summary of this policy prior to their child/ren's attendance at Nature program.

- Ensuring that a copy of this policy is available on request and is easily accessible to parents and staff at all times
- Ensuring staff and volunteers are appropriately educated on procedures detailed in this policy

The Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge and other educators are responsible for:

- Reading this policy and ensuring that the procedures detailed in this policy are carried out.
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of the Committee
- Reminding parents of the policy content as required
- Ensuring a Nature program permission form has been completed for each child before they attend the first Nature program session

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Reading and being familiar with the policy
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee
- Supervising their child/ren who are not enrolled in Nature program, such as siblings of a child attending Nature program.

Delivery and Collection

The Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, and other educators are responsible for:

- Meeting children and parents/guardians at the waiting area at the commencement of the session
- Ensuring the attendance sheet is located at the Nature program site
- Checking the clothing of children arriving at Nature program
- Checking the attendance sheet after all children have arrived and departed
- Notifying parents via email if the Nature program group has been forced to cancel
- Requesting parents or Authorised persons wishing to speak with staff that they will need to wait until all of the children have departed



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Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Sign the child in using the attendance sheet and record the actual time of arrival
- Place child's bag/backpack with change of clothes, water bottle and snack in nominated area
- Ensuring sunscreen has been applied to your child immediately before arrival or on arrival at Nature program
- Ensuring insect repellent has been applied to your child immediately before arrival or on arrival at Nature program
- Ensure the staff are aware your child is in attendance
- Taking your child to the toilet before leaving them in the care of the teacher

Note: If on arrival, the teachers are not present, this means that the session has been cancelled (for example, due to extreme forecast weather or staff absence) and the kindergarten session will take place at the Waterfall Gully Preschool building, 325 Bayview Rd, Rosebud.

On arrival at Nature program, a child may be refused entry if clothing is not appropriate (Refer to Nature program Protective Clothing Policy). If this occurs, the procedure for the Nature program Protective Clothing will be followed.

Parents will be notified of the meeting place for their group. If a parent is running late to drop their child off and the group is no longer at the meeting place then the teacher can be contacted via the emergency/Nature program mobile phone. Families are supplied with this phone number at the commencement of the Nature program.



NATURE PROGRAM PROTECTIVE CLOTHING POLICY

APPROVAL DATE
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May 2023

PURPOSE

This policy aims to:

- Set out clear guidelines for parents and guardians and staff regarding appropriate clothing to be worn by children attending Nature program in various weather conditions. This is to ensure participants safety and wellbeing and will include a description of clothing that should not be worn.
- Provide clear guidelines regarding the change of clothes requirements for Nature program participants.
- Provide an appropriate mechanism for communication of the protective clothing requirements for Nature program sessions to parents and guardians.

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Waterfall Gully Pre-School is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for children participating in the Nature program;
- Facilitating a Nature program experience in a variety of (safe) weather conditions, including rain, to allow children to experience nature without compromising the safety of participants;
- Ensuring clothing worn by participants in the program allow for free movement and do not obstruct the children in their activities in the Nature program setting. Allowing participants to remain comfortable.
- Facilitating communication to parents and guardians to ensure compliance with this policy



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Waterfall Gully Pre-School's Nature 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 Nature program setting that may differ from the requirements in a classroom or usual kinder environment.

Protective and Appropriate clothing and footwear – It is important that Nature participants wear clothing and footwear which allows them to move freely and undertake activities such as climbing, balancing, puddle jumping and running, and keeps participants warm and dry in cold/wet weather and sun protected in warm weather.

Clothing should:

1. Protect children from the damaging effects of the sun's UV
2. Prevent sunburn, bites, scratches and stings. Clothing should be loose fitting and light. Dresses and singlets are not appropriate.
3. Where possible be made from natural fabrics, which allow the body to breathe and are comfortable against the skin.

Footwear should:

1. Keep feet and toes covered at all times;
2. Have a flexible sole to allow children to climb and balance on uneven surfaces
3. Be weather appropriate. Please note it is not recommended that gumboots be worn at all times due to the restriction of movement they impose. They would be appropriate on days when it is very wet and children will be jumping in puddles.

Change of Clothes – All children participating in Nature program are required to bring a change of clothes as they may become muddy and wet. It is recommended that the change of clothing include: -

1. Spare tops and bottoms of appropriate thickness and weight for the forecasted weather on the day;
2. Spare underwear



3. Spare pairs of socks;
4. Children have to carry their own bag when we explore the park so packing a change of shoes is not recommended as it will make their bag too heavy.

Please note the Nature program “on-site kit” will contain some spare clothing, however it is essential that each child come prepared considering the anticipated weather conditions for the particular session of Nature program.

Each family will be required to collect a waterproof suit for their child at the beginning of the kindergarten year. A deposit will be paid by each family, which will cover the replacement value of these waterproof suits. Each family will be responsible for washing and caring for the suit and packing it for their child on wet days. The suit will be returned at the end of the kindergarten year and the deposit will be returned if the suit has been kept in good condition. The amount of this deposit will be kept in line with the replacement costs.

PROCEDURES

The Committee of Management is responsible for:

- Implementing and maintaining a Protective Clothing Policy which provides guidelines for parents and guardians, staff and volunteers as to the appropriate clothing participants are required to wear to Nature program in various weather conditions.
- Ensuring parents/guardians are aware of this policy and are provided access to the policy at orientation sessions, and made available on request.
- Ensuring staff are appropriately educated on procedures in the event participants are not wearing or in possession of compliant clothing.
- Ensuring the Nature program “on-site kit” contains spare clothing.

The Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, and other educators are responsible for:

- Encouraging children to tell a staff member if they have wet clothing that is making them uncomfortable



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- During orientation sessions, advising parents and guardians of the clothing requirements for Nature program participation
- Checking the contents of the Nature program “on-site kit” prior to the next session to ensure it contains spare clothing. If not, staff will make necessary arrangements prior to the next scheduled Nature program session.
- Ensuring all children being delivered to participate in Nature program are wearing or in possession of appropriate clothing in line with this policy. The following table provides examples of recommended clothing, clothing which is not recommended and clothing deemed unacceptable to allow participation.

Weather Conditions	Warm/Hot	Cold/Wet
Recommended clothing and footwear	Light, loose fitting tops and pants/shorts. Broad brimmed hat or Legionnaires hat . Closed toe shoes.	Waterproof suit (provided by kinder), long pants, long sleeved top, beanie, gloves, warm socks and gumboots/shoes. <i>Please note: gumboots can restrict children’s movement and therefore would only be appropriate on very wet days.</i>
Not Recommended	Long skirts or dresses.	Skirts and dresses – so as to enable waterproofs to be worn over clothing,
Unacceptable	Open toe shoes, sandals, thongs, crocs and singlet tops.	Non-waterproof outer clothing

If inappropriate clothing is worn or provided, staff are to:

- Highlight to the parent or guardian delivering the participant which clothing is inappropriate and the reasons for it;
- Determine if the change of clothes brought by the participant is appropriate and request that the parent or guardian change the participant’s clothing;



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- Check the “on-site kit” and if possible, locate alternate appropriate clothing;
- If the clothing has the potential to put the participant’s safety and wellbeing at risk and there is no suitable alternate clothing available, advise the parent or guardian that the child may not participate in Nature program for that session.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Ensuring protective and appropriate clothing is worn to Nature program by their child in line with this policy;
- Changing their child’s clothing as instructed by the teacher to enable their child to participate in the Nature program session;
- Ensure their child’s change of clothes includes items as set out in this policy;
- Reading and familiarising themselves with this policy;
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and Committee.



NATURE PROGRAM SAFETY AND HYGIENE POLICY

APPROVAL DATE
REVIEWED

May 2023

PURPOSE

This policy aims to clearly define the ways Waterfall Gully Preschool operates its Nature program to ensure the safety and hygiene of all participants including children, staff and volunteers.

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Waterfall Gully Preschool is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for children, staff and volunteers participating in the Nature program
- Being respectful of the community space that the Nature program site offers, whilst 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 Nature program, but ensuring that the program is not interrupted or disturbed by other park users

Waterfall Gully Preschool's Nature program is conducted in the Seawinds Gardens Purves Road, Arthurs Seat

The public and natural setting offers unique and varied opportunities for children but also presents some challenges and increased risk that would not be present in the normal kindergarten environment. To ensure the needs of the children, staff and volunteers are adequately met and potential risks are managed as effectively as possible, strategies have been put in place.

PROCEDURES

General



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The Committee of Management is responsible for:

- Providing equipment as required to ensure the comfort, safety and hygiene of children, staff and volunteers
- Ensuring Nature program risk assessment is completed annually and is reviewed and updated as necessary

The Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor and other educators are responsible for:

- Ensuring the Nature program risk assessment is completed and continually reviewed and documented
- Ensuring the trolley is stocked and onsite in case of emergencies, and that it contains:
 - First aid kit
 - Snake bite kit
 - Extra Drinking water
 - Towels
 - Picnic blankets
 - Spare clothes
 - Whistle
 - Emergency phone
 - Walkie talkies
 - Equipment relevant to the program such as a story book, paper and pencils, magnifying glasses, binoculars
- Ensuring medical management plans are accessible for each child as required
- Ensuring first aid supplies kept on site include extra Nature program specific items such as self cooling ice packs, large bandages, insect repellent and saline
- Provision of extra spare clothes
- A rubbish bin is provided for use during the session for paper towels, tissues, used gloves etc. Children and visitors are to take any other rubbish with them
- Ensuring supervision of children's play is of a high level due to the unpredictable nature of playing outdoors. Staff are to position themselves so that children are being supervised at all times
- The play area for children will be well-defined with natural boundaries and this will be communicated clearly to the children.



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- Ensuring children's play is safe and does not damage plants, trees, or interfere with the habitat
- Encourage children to climb trees with an adult nearby for support and encouragement. Staff are encouraged not to lift or support a child up the tree so as to minimize risk of back injury
- Engaging children in discussions with the educators both at circle times and in small groups throughout sessions regarding safe and appropriate play. Educators also role model safe play.
- Encourage children to watch where they walk, check for snakes in their path and up trees, use sticks safely when building and walking, check puddles before walking through them, look for spider webs and nests and to stay within vision of the teachers at all times.
- Ensuring children use hand sanitiser on their hands before eating.
- Ensure that after the toilet children wash their hands with water and soap and/or hand sanitizer
- Ensuring any volunteers, students and visitors sign into the sign in book

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Reading and being familiar with the policy
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee
- Supervising their child/ren who are not enrolled in Nature program, such as siblings of a child attending Nature program.

Nature program First Aid Kit will include:

- Gloves
- Note pad and pen
- Plastic Bags
- Saline
- Spare EpiPen
- Baby wipes and tissues
- Snake bite kit
- Non-stick dressings
- Bandages and Band aids
- Spare asthma medication
- Instant Snap cool packs



NATURE PROGRAM EXTREME WEATHER POLICY

APPROVAL DATE
REVIEWED

May 2023

PURPOSE

This policy aims to:

- Provide a framework around which well-informed decisions may be made by Waterfall Gully Preschool to cancel Nature program 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 Nature program 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 Nature program session at any time in response to the weather conditions (or for any other reason.)

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Waterfall Gully Preschool is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for children participating in the Nature program
- Facilitating a Nature program experience in a variety of safe weather conditions including rain, to allow children to experience nature as a broad a spectrum as possible without compromising the safety of the participants
- Accessing appropriate resources to enable well informed determinations to be made regarding weather conditions



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- Facilitating effective and timely communications to parents/guardians regarding weather conditions, cancellations or relocations of children in the event of extreme weather
- Respecting the rights of parents/guardians to remove their child from a Nature program session at any time in response to the weather conditions (or for any other reason)

Waterfall Gully Preschools Nature 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 Nature program 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.

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. Nature program sessions will be cancelled if any of these determinants are met.

WEATHER CONDITION	EXTREME WEATHER DETERMINANT CAUSING CANCELLATION
Forecast Temperature	Greater than 34 degrees Celsius. Note: there is no pre-set minimum temperature. Thermals and clothing layers should be worn on very cold days (refer to Protective Clothing Policy)
Forecast wind speed	>40km per hour
Predicted wind gusts	>40km per hour



Forecast electrical storm activity	Thunder storm / electrical storm forecast
Grounds flooded near or at Nature program site	On inspection of the Nature program site by educators
BOM weather warnings of extreme storm conditions and excessive rainfall	On warning issued by the Bureau of Meteorology

In addition to the above, Waterfall Gully Pre-School Committee and staff have the discretion to cancel a session/s if it views the weather to be poor for Nature program 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.

PROCEDURES

General

The Committee of Management is responsible for:

- Providing an extreme Weather Policy which gives clear guidelines to staff and parents about extreme conditions that will necessitate cancellation of a Nature program session/s and provide guidance and procedure for staff in the event of extreme weather during a Nature program session
- All parents/guardians being aware of this policy and are provided access to the policy on request
- Ensuring communication channels are in place to facilitate notification to parents/guardians in the event of cancellation of a Nature program session or if the group has been evacuated to a safe location in response to extreme weather.

The Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, and other educators are responsible for:

- Monitoring the weather forecast via the Bureau of Meteorology website the day prior to the Nature program session at approximately 6pm, and again the morning of the Nature program session at 7.30am. Staff will use the Willy Weather App which uses information from BOM.
- Making a decision as to whether or not Nature program will be conducted based on best weather forecast information available



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from Bureau of Meteorology, or on assessment of conditions at the site

- If extra clarification needed, staff will contact the Bureau of Meteorology by phone.
- Notifying parents/guardians of Nature program cancellation via SMS from the Kindergarten's mobile phone on the night before the Kinder session or by 7.30 am on the morning of the Nature program session

Note: A Nature program session may be cancelled at short notice or during a session based on updated weather information or at the discretion of staff.

- Notifying parents/guardians via email in the event a nature program session has been cancelled or if the group has been evacuated to a safe location in response to extreme weather conditions.
-

WEATHER CONDITION	SAFE ACTIONS
Heat Risks include sunburn, heat stress, heat stroke and dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring children for heat exhaustion / heat stroke• 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 are worn
Rain / Hail / Cold Risks include child getting wet, onset of hypothermia, injury from hailstones	<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, beanies, etc.• Seek shelter in heavy rain or hail•
Electrical storm activity / lightning Risks include lightning strike, trees / tree limbs falling as a result of lightning strike	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Move children away from trees• Seek undercover shelter• Administer First Aid, if required



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High Winds Risks include falling trees / tree limbs, blowing particles into eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure structures and dangerous items are secure• Move children away from trees• Seek shelter if necessary
BOM weather warnings of extreme storm conditions and excessive rainfall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cancel session on warning issued by the Bureau of Meteorology

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Ensuring they are comfortable at all times with the forecast weather conditions while their child is attending a Nature program 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 Nature program session, they are able to collect their child at any time.
- Ensuring that clothing suitable for the weather conditions is always worn and that a change of clothes is provided.
- Ensuring they carry a mobile phone with them at all times, and that they are contactable at all times while the Nature program session is in progress. Where a mobile phone 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.



NATURE PROGRAM EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY

APPROVAL DATE
REVIEWED

May 2023

PURPOSE

This policy is a special circumstance policy which augments the Waterfall Gully Pre School Emergency and Evacuation Policy and the Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Policy and should be read in conjunction with those policies. This Nature program policy only details the specific evacuation procedures for children, staff and volunteers attending the Nature program in response to an emergency or hazard that may arise during a session.

POLICY STATEMENT

Waterfall Gully Pre School is committed to:

- Providing a safe environment for children, staff and volunteers participating in the Nature program
- Ensuring that an appropriate response is provided, which meets the needs of participants during and following emergency incidents
- Providing effective procedures in place to manage emergency incidents at the Nature program site

There are a multitude of possible emergency situations that may arise at Nature program. These include, but are not limited to:

- Fire / Bushfire
- Chemical hazards
- Missing child
- Animals
- Uninvited person/stranger (threatening, causing a nuisance or unease for staff & participants)
- Toxic leak
- Hostage/siege



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- Natural events, such as extreme weather, floods, severe winds, thunderstorm or earthquake
- The involvement of firearms or other weapons
- Hazardous substances incidents
- Medical emergency (refer to Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness policy)
- Accident

The aim of this policy is to provide the appropriate response to such an incident or emergency to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all Nature program participants.

PROCEDURES

The Committee of Management is responsible for:

- Following all requirements in Waterfall Gully Pre School's main Emergency Evacuation Policy and the Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Policy
- Establishing, monitoring and reviewing the Nature program Risk Management Plan which identifies a number of potential hazards and risks and mechanisms for their treatment.
- Establishing, monitoring and reviewing (in consultation with staff) emergency evacuation procedures, a series of safe evacuation routes and assembly points in response to a range of potential emergency situations
- Ensuring emergency evacuation procedures are included in teachers' documentation carried at Nature program
- Ensuring a fully equipped portable first aid kit is included with the Nature program equipment
- Ensuring all teachers and volunteers are aware of the location of the first-aid kit at Nature program
- Developing a regular training schedule for Nature program staff that includes the operation of communication systems, evacuation procedures, including evacuation routes and safe places; and occupational health and safety and first aid
- Ensuring that all children, staff, parents/guardians, students, volunteers and visitors understand the requirements of this policy including conducting practice drills



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- Ensuring new Nature program staff, students and volunteers have an understanding of the Nature program policy and procedures in relation to emergency evacuation in their induction procedure
- Ensuring procedures are in place at Nature program to identify which staff are in attendance at any one time. All staff, visitors and volunteers will use the kindergarten attendance book to sign in and out when at Nature program. This can then be used to ensure that all staff are accounted for in the event of an emergency.

The Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge and other educators are responsible for:

- Ensuring the safety of the children, fellow staff members and volunteers in their care and protecting them from hazards at Nature program
- Being aware of the Nature program evacuation procedures set out in this policy.
- Conducting practice emergency evacuation procedures once each term, which are documented and dated
- Providing awareness and support to children before, during and after emergencies
- Providing input into the development of procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency situation, and contributing to the review of the procedures following an emergency incident
- Informing the committee and reporting notifiable or serious incidents to the appropriate authorities
- Recording incidents in the incident book
- Ensuring that all children, staff and volunteers are signed in and accounted for in the event of an evacuation

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Reading and being familiar with the policy
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee
- Ensuring children are signed in and out as per the requirements of the Pre School's Delivery and Collection of Children Policy (both the main policy and the Nature program Policy)
- Supporting children's awareness and education in emergency situations



- Following the directions of staff during an emergency, incident or drill.

Evacuation Procedures:

Whatever the emergency, incident or situation that necessitates the evacuation, the following procedures are to be followed by staff and volunteers

- Keep children calm
- Blow whistle three times
- Ensure attendance book is in the trolley along with other necessary items such as medication
- Count / check off against the attendance book to ensure all children and adults are accounted for
- Assess the situation and determine where the closest safe zone assembly point is located
- Walk to new location (see below for appropriate locations), calmly walk children in pairs, keep group close together and ensure no child deviates from the group
- Teachers/adult volunteers to be positioned at the front and back of the group, and flanking the group where possible
- Notify emergency services if required
- On arrival at safe assembly point, conduct a full count/roll call to ensure all children are accounted for
- Notify parents of new location for collection
- Notify DET (if required)
- If the evacuation/relocation is for weather reasons, wait for the extreme weather to pass and when it does, resume normal activities if appropriate and safe to do so, following same relocation procedures to return to the Nature program site
- If the weather does not look like it will pass soon notify parents of new location for collection.

Safe Zone Assembly Points

The safe zone assembly points will differ depending on the nature of the emergency.



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There are two possible Assembly points in the event that the group needs to seek shelter from extreme weather.

NATURE PROGRAM	EVACUATION AND MEETING POINTS
MEETING/GATHERING POINT	
Grass area near playground	To be used to gather together entire group, head count, give instructions, evacuation decision point.
EVACUATION POINT A	
Toilet block	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close by onsite evacuations • Sudden conditions. • Torrential rain, • Hail, • Electrical storm, • Extreme winds
EVACUATION POINT B	
Carpark at entrance to gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further distance evacuations • Situations at site that require further distance away. • Fire • Toxic leak/Chemical danger
FULL EVACUATION	Contact parents for early collection



NATURE PROGRAM SNAKE AWARENESS AND FIRST AID POLICY

APPROVAL DATE

May 2023

REVIEWED

PURPOSE

This policy aims to clearly define:

- The risk of snakes in the Nature program space
- Procedures for preventing snake bite
- The appropriate medical response to snake bites
- A framework for the appropriate education and training of children, teachers, co- educators, volunteers, parents and guardians on minimising the risk of snake bite.

POLICY STATEMENT

Waterfall Gully Preschool is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for children, teachers, co-educators, staff and volunteers participating in the Nature program
- Being respectful of wildlife in and around the Nature program space, including an awareness of the presence of snakes in the area in the warmer months
- Facilitating appropriate communication and education to staff, parents and guardians and children to minimise the risk of injury of a snake bite during Nature program sessions

Waterfall Gully Preschool's Nature program is conducted in parkland which may be in an area that snakes inhabit. Snakes are most prevalent in the warmer months (October-April), however they may be encountered at other times.

Unprovoked, snakes rarely attack humans and are generally shy, timid reptiles who will avoid conflict if afforded the opportunity. It is recommended that particular care be taken in warm weather, near long grass or hollow logs, near water or when near rocks in sunny positions.



Snakes are protected under the Wildlife Act 1975, and should not be harmed or killed. Bites can occur if people try to interfere with or kill snakes.

PROCEDURES

The Committee of Management is responsible for:

- The supply of a First Aid Kit on site at the Nature program space to administer first aid in response to snake bites, or for any other purpose which includes pressure immobilisation bandages (also known as compression bandages) for medical treatment of snake bites
- Ensuring staff are appropriately educated on procedures to prevent snake bite and to deliver first aid in response to a snake bite (see below)
- Following all procedures as set out in the Emergency Management Plan (including notice of serious incidents, appropriate record keeping in the event of an incident, to maintain the first aid kit etc.)
- Encouraging parents and guardians, through this policy, to teach children snake bite prevention behaviours outside of Nature program (for example, during family walks in bush areas)

The Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, and other educators and staff are responsible for:

- Continually practising and educating children on snake bite prevention behaviours whilst at Nature program, without fostering an unnatural fear or paranoia of snakes;
- Practising and highlighting to children the following snake prevention behaviours:
 - Leave snakes alone
 - Wear adequate clothing and stout shoes (no sandals or thongs) in the Nature program space
 - Never put hands in hollow logs or thick/long grass without prior inspection
 - When stepping over logs, carefully inspect the ground on the other side
 - Ensure children are reminded, on a regular basis, that if they encounter a snake, to move away quietly and immediately report the sighting to a teacher



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- In the event that a snake is encountered at Nature program, calmly moving children away from the snake. Staff must not attempt to touch or harm the snake

In the case of a snake bite occurring at Nature program staff would complete the following procedure:

1. Administering first aid in the event of a snake bite
2. Immediately calling an ambulance for the patient of a snake bite
3. Keep the patient calm and reassure them
4. Send someone to the arrival carpark to meet the ambulance and guide them to the patient's location
5. After the incident, reporting the snake bite to all relevant persons/organisations including the parents/guardians/family of the patient, the Local Law Officer at Morn Pen Shire 1300 850 600 and the Department of Education and Training.
6. Following all procedures as set out in the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Teaching children, on an ongoing basis about safe snakebite prevention behaviours outside of Nature program (for example during family walks in bush areas).
- Reading and being familiar with this Policy;
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and the Committee of Management,

FIRST AID FOR SNAKE BITES

(Source: Austin Hospital Victorian Poisons Information Centre)

Dangerous snakes found in Victoria include:

- Tiger snake (the most common cause of snake envenoming in Victoria)
- Common or Eastern brown snake
- Copperhead snake
- Red-bellied black snake.



There are other venomous snakes found in other parts of Australia.

All snake bites should be regarded as being dangerous. Identification of a snake is difficult and there are serious consequences of wrongly identifying a snake as non-venomous.

Bites from venomous snakes do not always cause illness; sometimes a snake will not be able to achieve an effective bite and may only scratch the victim.

Preventing snakebites

Most cases of snakebite can be avoided by following these simple rules:

- Leave snakes alone
- Wear adequate clothing and stout shoes (not sandals/thongs) in 'snake country'
- Never put hands in hollow logs or thick grass without prior inspection
- When stepping over logs, carefully inspect the ground on the other side
- Keep barns and sheds free of mice and rats, as they will attract snakes
- Keep grass well cut

First aid for snakebites

- Stay calm and call 000.
- Note: Do not wash the bite site. Traces of venom that are left on the skin can be tested to identify the snake group, and therefore the type of anti-venom that may be indicated.
- Venom is injected deeply so there is no benefit in cutting or sucking the bite. A tourniquet is not an effective way to restrict venom movement.
- The most effective first aid for snakebite is the pressure bandage with immobilisation (PBI) technique. The principle is to minimise the movement of the venom around the body until the victim is in a hospital by applying a firm bandage (or suitable alternative) to the bitten area and limb, and to immobilise the victim. When applied properly, this method can trap the venom in the bitten area for many hours. The victim might not suffer any effects of the venom



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P.O. Box 261
Rosebud Victoria 3939



until the pressure bandage is released, which is done in hospital where anti-venom can be administered if required.

After the pressure bandage and splint are in place:

- Bring transport to the victim
- Keep the victim still
- Leave bandages in place until the victim has reached a medical facility.

Snake bite



**IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY
CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000) FOR AN AMBULANCE.**

DRSABCD Danger ► Response ► Send for help ► Airway ► Breathing ► CPR ► Defibrillation

The DRSABCD Action Plan is the first step when providing first aid. Use this to assess the immediate situation. [DOWNLOAD THE DRSABCD FACT SHEET.](#)

All known or suspected snake bites must be treated as potentially life-threatening, and medical aid should be sought urgently.

WARNING

Do not wash venom off the skin or clothes because it may assist identification.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Signs of a snake bite are not always visible and, in some cases, the patient may not have felt anything. Symptoms may not appear for an hour or more after the person has been bitten.

Depending on the type of snake, signs and symptoms may include some or all of the following:

- immediate or delayed pain at the bite site
- swelling, bruising or local bleeding
- bite marks (usually on a limb) that may vary from obvious puncture wounds to scratches that may be almost invisible
- swollen and tender glands in the groin or armpit of the bitten limb
- faintness, dizziness
- nausea and vomiting
- headache
- abdominal pain
- oozing of blood from the bite site or gums
- double or blurred vision
- drooping eyelids
- difficulty in speaking or swallowing
- limb weakness or paralysis
- difficulty in breathing
- occasionally, initial collapse or confusion followed by partial or complete recovery.

WHAT TO DO

- 1 Follow DRSABCD.
- 2 **Call triple zero (000)** for an ambulance.
- 3 Lie the patient down and ask them to keep still.
- 4 Reassure the patient.
- 5 Apply a pressure bandage as soon as possible:
 - if on a limb, apply a broad pressure bandage (crepe preferred) over the bite site (90% of snake bites occur on a limb)
 - apply a firm crepe or elasticised roller bandage (10–15 centimetres wide), starting just above the fingers or toes and moving upwards on the bitten limb as far as can be reached. Use clothing or other material if a roller bandage is not available
 - apply the bandage as tightly as possible to the limb.
- 6 Immobilise the bandaged limb using splints.
- 7 Keep the patient lying down and completely still.
- 8 Write down the time of the bite and when the bandage was applied. If possible, mark the location of the bite site (if known) on the skin with a pen, or photograph the site.
- 9 Stay with the patient until medical aid arrives.



YOU COULD SAVE A LIFE WITH FIRST AID TRAINING WWW.STJOHN.ORG.AU • 1300 360 455

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