

Bush Kinder Protective clothing

Authorised by:	This policy was adopted by the Ripponlea Kindergarten Committee of Management at a committee meeting
Approved date:	28 April 2025
Review date:	April 2028

Purpose

This policy aims to:

- set out clear guidelines for parents 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)
- provide clear guidelines regarding the change of clothes requirements for Bush Kinder participants
- provide an appropriate mechanism for communication of the protective clothing requirements for Bush Kinder sessions to parents.

Values

Ripponlea Kindergarten 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 maximum comfort, free movement and does not obstruct the children in their activities in the Bush Kinder setting
- facilitating communication to parents to ensure compliance with this policy.

Scope

This policy applies to parents, staff, committee members, people authorised to collect the children, volunteers and students on placement working at Ripponlea Kindergarten.

Background and legislation

Ripponlea Kindergarten'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 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.

Legislation and standards

This policy is informed by the following legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- *Education and Care Services National Law 2010*

- National Quality Standard
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007.

Related policies

- *Excursion & Service Events Policy*
- *Bush Kinder Delivery & Collection of Children Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)*
- *Bush Kinder Extreme Weather Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)*
- *Bush Kinder Emergency Evacuation Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)*
- *Bush Kinder Snake Awareness Policy (Bush Kinder Specific)*
- *Occupational Health & Safety Policy*
- *Illness, Injury, and Trauma Policy*
- *Sun Protection Policy*
- *Water Safety Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*
- *Child Safe Environment Policy*

Procedures

General

The Committee is responsible for:

- implementing and maintaining a Protective Clothing Policy that clarifies the appropriate clothing children must wear at Bush Kinder in various weather conditions to ensure their safety and wellbeing (including a description of clothing that should not be worn)
- all parents being aware of this policy and are provided access to the policy at orientation sessions, in written Bush Kinder material and on the Kinder website, and made available on request
- supplying waterproofs and high visibility vests.

Staff are responsible for:

- ensuring all children being dropped off to Bush Kinder are wearing appropriate clothing in line with this policy. If children are wearing inappropriate clothing, staff must:
 - highlight to the parent dropping off the child which clothing items are inappropriate and why
 - 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.
 - if the clothing can put the child's safety and wellbeing at risk and there is no suitable clothing, inform the parent that the child is not able to attend Bush Kinder
- assisting changing the child's clothing if need be
- encouraging children to tell a staff member if they need help with clothing or feel uncomfortable
- during orientation sessions, advising parents of the clothing requirements for Bush Kinder

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring their child wears protective and appropriate clothing to Bush Kinder in line with this policy
- changing their child's clothing as instructed by the teacher if necessary, so the child can participate in the Bush Kinder session
- ensuring their child's change of clothes complies with this policy
- reading and being familiar with the policy
- bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee
- changing children into and out of the waterproofs at the start and end of each session as required.

Evaluation

To assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes we will:

- seek feedback about this policy and its implementation from parents of children participating in the Bush Kinder program. This can be facilitated through discussions and the annual survey
- ask staff to share their experiences and observations about the effectiveness of this policy
- regularly review the policy and Kinder practices to ensure they comply with any new legislation, research or best practice procedures.

Attachments

- Nil

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, puddle jumping
- 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, keeps feet and toes covered and has a flexible and gripped 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 sleeve tops and long pants, broad brimmed or legionnaires hat, closed toe shoes.	Waterproofs*, long pants, long sleeved top, beanie, gumboots, waterproof gloves, thermals in very cold weather
Not recommended	Short sleeved tops, long skirts or dresses, shorts.	Skirts, dresses (incompatible with waterproofs)
Unacceptable clothing and footwear	Crocs, thongs, singlet tops	Non-waterproof clothing (waterproofs on top of non-waterproof clothing is acceptable)

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)
- two pairs of socks
- one pair of gumboots (it is not recommended that gumboots are worn at all times due to the restriction of movement they impose).

Waterproofs: * Waterproofs provided by Ripponlea Kindergarten including waterproof suit.