

# **J.S. GREY KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION, INC.**

## **Nature Explorers Bush Kinder - Dog Awareness Policy**

**Mandatory – Quality Area 2**

### **Purpose**

This policy intends to outline the relevant procedures of addressing situations whereby children, staff and volunteers are faced with dogs off lead that may enter the Bush Kinder zones. This document also supports the learning community with clear guidelines for dealing with angry or threatening dogs and/or dog attacks. The policy has highlighted the appropriate medical responses in the event of a dog bite and is intended to be used as a framework for the appropriate education of children, staff and families.

### **Policy statement**

#### *1. Values*

J.S Grey Kindergarten is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for children and staff participating in the Bush Kinder program
- Being respectful of the space that the bush kinder site offers, including an awareness of the of wandering dogs, off lead in the area.
- Facilitating appropriate communication and education to staff and parents to minimise the risk of injury of a dog bite to children and staff during bush kinder.

#### *2. Scope*

This policy applies to parents, staff, committee members, authorised persons, volunteers and students on placement working at J S Grey Kindergarten.

#### *3. Background and legislation*

##### *Background*

J.S Grey Bush Kinder program is conducted at Egan Reserve, Thornbury. This location does permit dogs, therefore the possibility that wandering dogs may enter this area is high. It is important that children, staff and parents are aware of the recommended behaviour around dogs and that appropriate communication and training is undertaken to minimise the risk of dog attack injury.

##### *Legislation*

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007*
- *First Aid in the Workplace (2008)*

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

#### 4. Definitions

**Safe behaviour around dogs:** The following rules are recommended by Agriculture Victoria's 'Responsible Pet Ownership' program and reinforced by the Victorian Government's Better Health Channel Website:

- Always supervise children and dogs
- If you are unable to supervise even for a short time, separate children from dogs.
- Never approach a strange dog
- When approaching dogs, ALWAYS: ASK the permission of the owner
- Always let the dog smell the back of your hand first, with thumb tucked into fingers, forming a fist.
- Pat dogs gently and calmly from the collar to the tail
- Do not pat a dog on its head.
- Stand still if a dog approaches (don't make direct eye contact, hands in fists by your side with thumbs on the inside)
- Never intervene between dogs that are fighting
- Never disturb a dog that is eating or sleeping

**Bush Kinder Site:** Egan Reserve, Miller Street, Thornbury entrance

**Duty of care:** A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury. In the context of this policy, duty of care refers to the responsibility of education and care services to provide children, staff, students, volunteers, contractors and anyone visiting the service with an adequate level of care and protection against reasonable foreseeable harm and injury.

#### 5. Procedures

The **Committee** is responsible for:

- Supplying a First Aid Kit on site at Bush Kinder to administer first aid in response to dog bites or for any other purpose.
- Encouraging parents, through this policy, to practice safe dog behaviours at home and to teach children on an ongoing basis how to behave around dogs to minimise risk of dog bites.
- Ensuring staff are appropriately educated on procedures in the event of an aggressive or threatening dog at the bush kinder site and in the event of a dog attack.
- Following all procedures as set out in the Incident, Illness, Trauma & Illness Policy (including notice of notifiable incidents, appropriate record keeping in the event of an incident, maintain first aid kit etc)
- Organizing 'Responsible pet ownership' program in term 1 of each year, community events such as COVID-19 permitting, for the four year old kinder group.

*The Staff are responsible for:*

- Running a 'Responsible pet ownership' education session for the four year old kinder group and ensuring a safe space for any children with allergies relating to animals. Paying particular attention in the session to recognising the warning signs given by dogs, the correct way to approach a dog and what to do if approached by an aggressive dog.
- Continually educating children on the appropriate behaviours around dogs, including recognising warning signs, the correct way to approach a dog, and what to do if approached by an aggressive dog
- Administering first aid in the event of a dog attack
- Following procedures in the event of a dog in attack mode.
- Ensuring incidents are reported and documented in accident and illness records.
- Ensuring children wash hands if they touch a dog.
- Carrying out the following specific procedures in the event of one of the following incidents occurring:

*i. If a dog off a lead enters the Bush Kinder site*

- Remind children to stand still and not to touch or encourage the dog or make any sudden movements.
- Locate the owner if possible and encourage the owner to move the dog away the bush kinder site and put the dog on a lead.

*ii. If an aggressive and threatening dog enters the Bush Kinder Site*

- Remind children to keep quiet and still, look down (no eye-contact with dog), and put arms by sides with hands in fists with thumbs on the inside.
- Encourage children to keep calm and not run.
- Wait until the dog leaves the area before resuming activities.
- Locate the owner if possible and encourage the owner to put the dog on a lead and move the dog away from the bush kinder site.

*iii. If a dog attacks a child*

- Staff will follow current first aid practice. This practice will be informed by up to date Level 2 First Aid Training.
- Staff are to follow procedures as set out in Incident, Illness, Trauma & Illness Policy, including contacting parent, calling ambulance, logging incidents etc

*The **Parents** are responsible for:*

- Practising safe dog behaviours at home and outside of the kinder
- Teaching children on an ongoing basis how to behave around dogs to minimise risk of dog bites
- If possible, attending the 'Responsible pet ownership' education session as provided by the committee for children, parents and staff
- Collecting their child as soon as possible when notified of an incident or medical emergency involving their child (such as a dog bite)
- Reading and being familiar with the policy
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee
- Informing management and staff of any allergies to animals.

## 6. Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the proprietor (committee) 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.

*This policy will be reviewed every year by a formal Committee review in, unless deemed necessary earlier.*

Endorsed by the J S Grey Kindergarten Committee of Management on: 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**REVIEW DATE:** 03/02/2022

**NEXT REVIEW DATE:** 03/02/2023