	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thornbury Kindergarten.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Policies</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Policy Title</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Extreme Weather (Bush Kinder)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Quality Area</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2 – Children’s Health and Safety</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Category</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Best Practice</p>

## 1. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Provide a framework around which well-informed decisions may be made by Thornbury Kindergarten to cancel Bush Kinder session/s in response to forecast weather conditions, and 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 an 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).

## 2. Values

Thornbury 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
- Accessing appropriate resources to enable well-informed determinations to be made regarding weather conditions.
- Facilitating effective and timely communication to parents and guardians regarding weather conditions, cancellations or relocation of children in the event of extreme weather.

- Respecting the right 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).

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to children, parents/guardians, staff, committee members, authorised persons, volunteers and students on placement working at Thornbury Kindergarten.

### 4. Background and legislation

Thornbury Kindergarten'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 bush or natural environment. However, extreme weather conditions may arise periodically which can put the wellbeing and safety of the children and staff 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:

- The Children's Services Act 1996 (CSA)
- Children's Services Regulations 2009 (CSR)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

### 5. Definitions

Bureau of Meteorology: Australia's national weather, climate and water agency. Website [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au) Various iphone/ipad apps use BOM data (e.g. Pocket Weather)

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:

<b>Weather Condition</b>	<b>Extreme weather determinant causing cancellation</b>
Forecast temperature	36 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	> 40km per hour
Forecast of electrical storm activity	Thunder storm/electrical storm forecast
Darebin Parklands flooded at or near the Bush Kinder site	On flooding advice from the Ranger.
BOM weather warnings of extreme storm conditions and excessive rainfall	On warning issued by the Bureau of Meteorology

In addition to the above, the Thornbury Kindergarten Committee and Bush Kinder staff have 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.

Further, the Darebin Parklands Ranger has the authority to override the Thornbury Kindergarten Committee determination on safety and request cancellation of a session should he feel the Bush Kinder site be unsafe.

Protective Clothing: Refer to *Protective Clothing Policy*

## 6. Sources and related centre policies

### Victorian Government 'Better health channel website

#### Centre policies

- Protective Clothing (Bush Kinder specific)
- Emergency Evacuation (Bush Kinder specific)
- Play Benefit & Risk Policy (Bush Kinder specific)
- Incident and medical emergency management
- Communication
- Excursions and centre events

## 7. Procedures

### General

#### **The Committee and Bush Kinder staff are 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 provides guidance and procedures 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 upon request.
- Monitoring the weather forecast via the Bureau of Meteorology website (or via mobile phone app) the day prior to the Bush Kinder session.
- Sending an SMS to parents/guradians/staff if the Bush Kinder session/s is cancelled via the Bush Kinder mobile phone as soon as possible prior to commencement of the session.
- 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 conditions.
- Ensuring that on high wind days (forecast wind speed > 40km/h) that at least two volunteers be tasked with managing gear and tents on that day.

#### **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 for whatever reason, 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 or collecting their child from a session in the event that extreme weather arises during a session.
- Ensuring protective clothing is worn by their child to suit the weather conditions and ensure a change of clothes is provided (including shoes) (Refer to Protective Clothing Policy).
- Ensuring they carry a mobile phone with them and be contactable at all times while their child's Bush Kinder session is in progress.
- Reading and being familiar with the policy.
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee.

## **In the event of forecast extreme or bad weather**

In cases of forecast extreme weather (see definition above), Thornbury Kindergarten will make the decision to cancel the Bush Kinder program for the sessions affected.

In addition to the extreme weather determinants detailed in the table under 'Definitions', the Thornbury Kindergarten Committee and Bush Kinder staff have the discretion to cancel the session if it views the weather to be unsuitable for Bush Kinder purposes, and the Darebin Parklands Ranger also has the authority to cancel a session due to extreme weather conditions at the site.

The Committee and Bush Kinder staff are responsible for;

- Monitoring the weather forecast via the Bureau of Meteorology website (or via mobile phone app) the day prior to the session
- Making a determination to cancel or conduct the bush kinder sessions the next day based on the weather forecast
- Providing a notice to parents/guardians/staff of the status of the Bush Kinder session/s as follows:
- Sending an SMS to parents/guradians/staff if the Bush Kinder session/s is cancelled via the Bush Kinder mobile phone as soon as possible prior to commencement of the session.

AND if the session is cancelled:

- By broadcast SMS to the Bush Kinder group (again, by 6pm the day before the session, or by 8am on the day of the session)
- Note that a Bush Kinder session may be cancelled at short notice or any other time by broadcast SMS based on updated weather information.
- Providing a notice of the cancellation to the Darebin Parklands Ranger as a matter of courtesy (Refer Bush Kinder Contact Sheet for contact details)

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### **Staff are responsible for:**

- Keeping their mobile phone with them on day of the session to receive notice of cancellation in cases of extreme weather updates which necessitate cancellation

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- Keeping their mobile phone with them on day of the session to receive notice of cancellation in cases of extreme weather updates which necessitate cancellation

**In the event of weather becoming extreme during a session**

**Staff are responsible for:**

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

Weather condition	Staff Actions
Heat <i>Risks include sunburn, heat stress, heat stroke, dehydration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitor children for heat exhaustion/heat stroke (see <i>Attachment 1</i> for symptoms and treatments).</li><li>• Offer water for hydration at regular intervals.</li><li>• Establish activities in shaded areas and encourage children to play in the shade.</li><li>• Ensure application of sunscreen every two hours.</li><li>• Ensure appropriate protective clothing including hats. [Refer <i>Protective Clothing Policy</i> for more information].</li></ul>
Rain/Hail/Cold <i>Risks include child getting wet (and onset of hypothermia), injury from hailstones</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitor children for wet clothing and change if necessary (with assistance of volunteers).</li><li>• Ensure appropriate clothing is worn (eg, waterproof clothing, gloves, gumboots).</li><li>• Encourage wearing of appropriate clothing, including coats, gloves, scarves etc.</li><li>• Seek shelter in heavy rain or in hail [See <i>Relocation Procedures</i> below].</li></ul>

<p>Electrical storm activity/lightning</p> <p>Risks include lightning strike, trees/tree limbs falling as a result of lightning strike</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move children away from trees.</li> <li>• Seek indoor shelter [See Relocation Procedures below].</li> <li>• See Attachment 2 for Lightning Safety Fact Sheet.</li> </ul>
<p>High winds</p> <p>Risks include falling trees/tree limbs, blowing particles (sand dirt) into eyes, Bush Kinder structures blowing down/away etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure structures and dangerous items are secure.</li> <li>• Move children away from trees.</li> <li>• Seek shelter if necessary [See Relocation Procedures below].</li> <li>• Any equipment/structures must be moved by at least two staff/volunteer to minimise risk of injury.</li> <li>• If the children are being moved, follow the 'Relocating to a safe position' instructions below.</li> </ul>

- In the event of illness or injury during a session as a result of weather conditions, the Illness Policy and Incident and Medical Emergency Management Policy must be followed.
- 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.

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- Collecting their child at any time during the session if they are not comfortable with the weather conditions.

**Procedures for Relocating to a Safe Position**

Relocation Safe Zones

<p>Hail, torrential rain</p>	<p>Seek shelter under the BBQ shelter (Refer Map at <i>Attachment 3</i>)</p>
<p>Electrical storm/lightning, extreme winds</p>	<p>Seek shelter in Darebin Creek Environment Centre (adjacent to Ranger's Office near Separation St entrance) (Refer Map at <i>Attachment 3</i>)</p>

If conditions necessitate evacuation from the Darebin Parklands, follow procedures in the *Emergency Evacuation Policy (Bush Kinder specific)*

### **Procedures for relocating**

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

- Blow whistle.
- Keep children calm.
- Ensure sign-in sheet is in the teacher's backpack along with other necessary items such as medication.
- Count/check off against the sign-in sheet to ensure all children are accounted for.
- With the exception of the teacher's backpack, leave Bush Kinder gear at the site – it can be collected later.
- En route 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.
- 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.
- If the weather does not look like it will pass soon, a broadcast SMS should be sent to all parents, advising of the new safe location for pickup purposes.

## **8. 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/guardians of children participating in the Bush Kinder program. This can be facilitated through discussions and the annual centre survey.
- Review the centre's actions in response to extreme weather conditions.
- Ask staff to share their experiences in cases of extreme weather (in cases where sessions were cancelled, and in cases where extreme weather arose during a session).
- Regularly review the policy and centre practices to ensure they are compliant with any new legislation, research or best practice procedures.



## 9. Attachments

*Attachment 1:* Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke – Symptoms and Treatments

*Attachment 2:* Lightning Action Guide and First Aid Guidelines

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

## 10. Authorisation

This policy was approved by the committee of management of Thornbury Kindergarten at a committee meeting December 2017.

Review date:        December 2019

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## ATTACHMENT 1

### Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke – Symptoms and Treatments

*Department of Human Services December 2008*

Heat exhaustion is a serious condition that can develop into heat stroke.

Warning signs may include:

- Pale and sweating
- Rapid heart rate
- Muscle cramps, weakness
- Dizziness, headache
- Nausea, vomiting
- Fainting

Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency. It occurs when the body is unable to prevent the temperature rising rapidly.

The symptoms may be the same as for heat exhaustion, but the skin may be dry with no sweating, and the person's mental condition worsens. They may stagger, appear confused, have a fit, or collapse and become unconscious.

What to do for heat exhaustion

- Get the person to a cool area and lie them down
- Remove outer clothing
- Wet skin with cool water or wet cloths
- Seek medical advice

What to do for heat stroke

- Call an ambulance
  - Get the person to a cool area and lie them down
  - Remove clothing and wet skin with water, fanning continuously
  - Position an unconscious person on their side and clear the airway
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## ATTACHMENT 2

### LIGHTNING ACTION GUIDE AND FIRST AID GUIDELINES

#### LIGHTNING ACTION GUIDE

*Source: Emergency Management Australia*

##### Be Prepared

- Check with your local electrical contractor for advice on surge protectors and lightning conductors.
- Have an emergency kit on hand, including a battery operated radio, torch and spare batteries.
- 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.
- Secure pets in a safe place.

###### 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

- Keep your radio tuned to local media for updated weather reports and power outages.
- 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 Service office.

[www.ema.gov.au](http://www.ema.gov.au)

## **FIRST AID RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LIGHTNING VICTIMS**

*Source: Department of Sport & 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 nearest Emergency Service and provide directions and information about the likely number of victims.

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### **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 the victim rapidly if necessary. Rescuers are cautioned to minimise their exposure to lightning as much as possible.

### **Resuscitation**

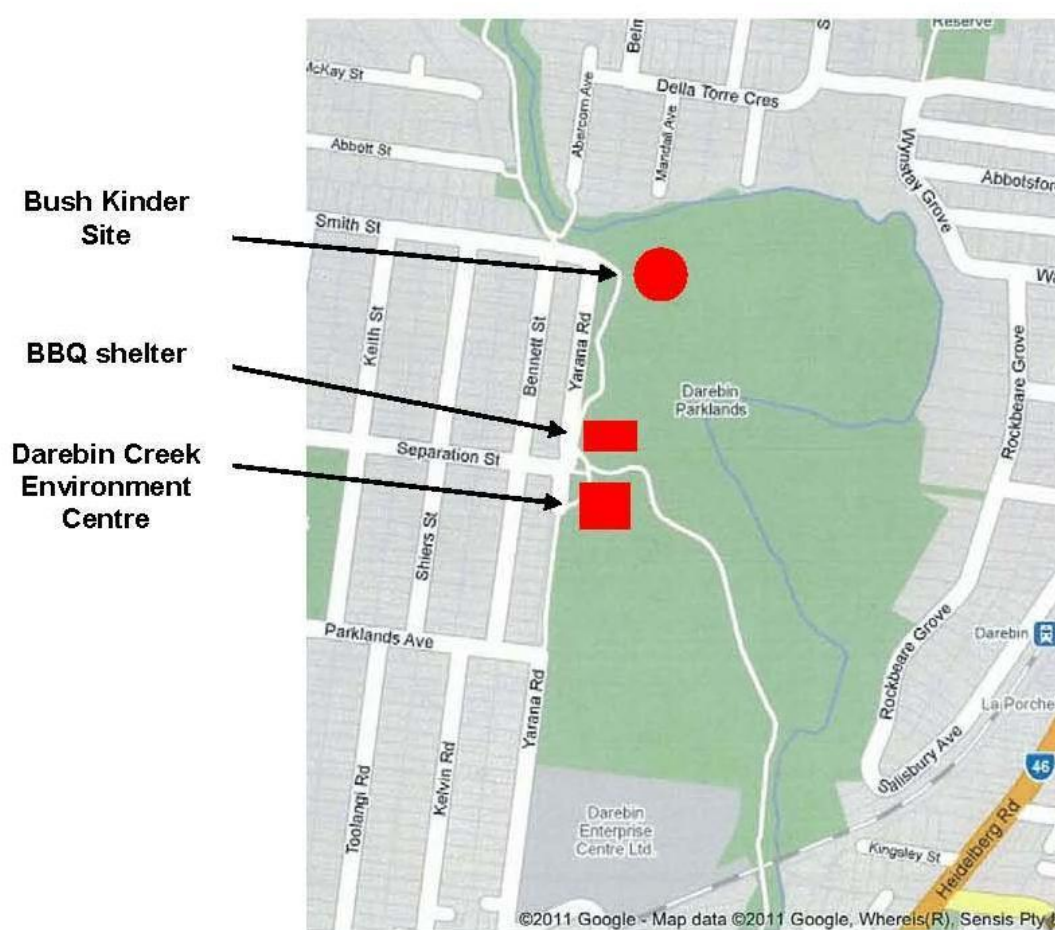
If the victim is not breathing, start mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. If it is decided to move the victim, give a few quick breaths prior to moving them. Determine if the victim has a pulse by checking the pulse at the carotid artery (side of the neck) or femoral artery (groin) for at least 20–30 seconds. If no pulse is detected, start cardiac compressions as well. In situations that are cold and wet, putting a protective layer between the victim and the ground may decrease the hypothermia that the victim suffers which can further complicate the resuscitation.

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## ATTACHMENT 3

### BUSH KINDER SITE MAP SHOWING SAFE RELOCATION ZONES IN THE EVENT OF EXTREME WEATHER

Weather event	Safe Relocation Zone
Hail, torrential rain	Seek shelter under the BBQ shelter
Electrical storm/lightning, extreme wind	Seek shelter in Darebin Creek Environment Centre (adjacent to Ranger's Office near Separation St entrance).



If conditions necessitate evacuation from the Darebin Parklands, follow procedures in the *Emergency Evacuation Policy (Bush Kinder specific)*