

# Early Years Services – QA2.22 Bush Kinder Snake Awareness & First Aid

TRIM Reference: D15/74610 Due for Review: 28 June 2024  
Responsible Officer: Coordinator Early Years

## Purpose

This policy outlines Surf Coast Shire Council's commitment to:

- The risk of snakes in the Bush/Beach Kinder environment;
- Procedures for preventing snake bite;
- The appropriate medical response to snake bites;
- A framework for the appropriate education and training of children, staff, parents/guardians and children on minimizing the risk of snake bite.

## Policy Principles

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

## Scope

This policy applies to all Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services staff, students, volunteers, children and their families accessing the services.

## Policy

**The Surf Coast Early Years Management is responsible for:**

- supplying a First Aid Kit on site at Bush Kinder 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 snakebite and to deliver First Aid in response to a Snake Bite (see below);
- ensuring at least two members of staff hold Level 2 First Aid;
- following all procedures as set out in the **Incident and Medical Emergency Management** Policy (including notice of notifiable incidents, appropriate record keeping in the event of an incident, maintain first aid kit etc.);
- encouraging parents to teach children snake bite prevention behaviours outside of Bush/Beach Kinder (for example, on family walks in the bush).

**Staff/educators are responsible for:**

- Ensuring a First Aid Kit is carried on site at Bush/Beach Kinder 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;
- Continually practicing and educating children on snake bite prevention behaviours while at Bush/Beach Kinder, without fostering an unnatural fear or paranoia of snakes. This includes practising and highlighting to children the following key points:

*Snake Bite Prevention Behaviours (Source: Victorian Poisons Information Centre, Austin Health)*  
– Leave snakes alone

- Wear adequate clothing and stout shoes (not sandals/thongs) in 'snake country'
  - Never put hands in hollow logs, holes or thick 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 report the sighting immediately to a staff/educator;
  - calmly moving children away from the snake in the event that a snake is encountered at Bush/Beach Kinder [Staff must not attempt to touch or harm the snake];
  - administering first aid in the event of a snake bite as follows:

*First aid for snakebite (Source: Victorian Poisons Information Centre, Austin Health, and Australian Venom Research Institute, Melbourne University)*

- Stay calm and call for help. Have someone phone an ambulance. If unable to phone, send someone for help.
  - Reassure the patient and encourage them to remain calm and still. Do not move the patient.
  - Do not attempt to catch or kill the snake
  - DO NOT WASH the bite. Traces of venom that are left on the skin can be used to identify the snake, and therefore the type of antivenom that should be used if required.
  - 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 a snake bite is the **pressure-immobilisation 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 until the compression is released, which is done in hospital where antivenom can be administered if required.
- Staff are to follow procedures as set out in Incident & Medical Emergency Management Policy, including contacting parent/guardian, calling ambulance etc

#### Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Ensuring that children are wearing appropriate clothing and footwear;
- teaching children on an ongoing basis safe snake bite prevention behaviours outside Bush/Beach Kinder, for example, on family walks in the bush;
- reading and being familiar with the policy;
- bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee.

Unprovoked, snakes rarely attack humans and are generally shy, timid animals that will avoid conflict if given the opportunity. It is recommended that particular care be taken in warm weather, near long grass or hollow logs, near water or 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 kill snakes.

#### Definitions

Australian Venom Research Unit (AVRU): is an internationally recognised interdisciplinary research unit focused on the problem of venomous injury in Australia and the Asia-Pacific. Located within Melbourne University, the Australian Venom Research Unit aims to provide world-class expertise on the problem of Australia's venomous creatures, their toxins and the care of the envenomed patient.

Pressure Immobilisation Bandage (also known as Compression Bandage): Bandage used for the purpose of applying pressure to the site of a wound such as snakebite and to the affected limb. Refer definition below of Pressure Immobilisation Bandaging.

**Pressure Immobilisation Bandaging:** The principle of pressure-immobilisation bandaging as a first aid measure is to prevent the spread of toxins through the body. This is done by applying enough pressure to compress the lymph vessels, and by preventing movement of the affected limb.

Correct application of the technique can buy valuable time to get the patient to medical assistance. [Refer to Attachment 1 for correct application of pressure immobilisation technique]

**Victorian Poisons Information Centre (VPIC):** Located at the Austin Hospital, the role of the VPIC is to provide the people of Victoria with a timely, safe information service in poisonings and suspected poisonings. For members of the public this includes telephone assessment, advice on first aid, with or without referral to a doctor or hospital. Information is given to health professionals about formulations of products and management of poisoned patients.

## Related Procedure

Nil.

## References

### Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Polices

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| D13/4174  | SCS-014 Occupational Health and Safety Policy  |
| D14/15939 | WHS 8.0 Surf Coast Shire Council Workplace Health and Safety Procedure - First Aid                                   |
| D14/15944 | WHS 9.0 Surf Coast Shire Council Workplace Health and Safety Procedure – Incident/Injury Reporting and Investigation |
| D14/1593  | WHS 2.0 Hazard Inspection, Risk Assessment and Control   |
| D15/2311  | WHS 32.0 Surf Coast Shire Council Workplace Health and Safety Procedure – Infectious Diseases                        |
| D14/94986 | Early Years First Aid Policy   |
| D15/16286 | Early Years Access and Inclusion Policy  |
| D14/94981 | Early Years Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy   |
| D15/32925 | Early Years Medical Conditions and Medications Policy  |
| D15/33004 | Early Years Supervision of Children Policy   |
| D15/16297 | Early Years Services Enrolment Policy  |
| D14/94973 | Early Years Delivery and Collection of Children Policy   |

### Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Works Instructions and Forms

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| D14/48936 | Early Years Medication Record Form                           |
| D15/63330 | Early Years Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record Form |
| D17/32578 | Template Regular Outing Authority                            |
| D14/4850  | WHS 9.1 Incident Report Form                                 |

### Other References

Staying Healthy in Child Care, 5th Edition, NHMRC, 2013  
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010  
ACECQA National Quality Framework Resource Kit ([www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au))  
Childcare Service Handbook (Department of Education)  
Staying Healthy in Child Care, 5th Edition, NHMRC, 2013  
DEECD Serious Incident Notification Report  
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004  
Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007  
Occupational Health and Safety Compliance Codes, First Aid in the Workplace (2008)  
Wildlife Act 1975  
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (National Law)  
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (The Regulations) and the National Quality Standard (Schedule 1 of the Regulations)  
Bites & Stings web resource, Victorian Poisons Information Centre, Austin Health [www.austin.org.au](http://www.austin.org.au)  
Australian Venom Research Institute (University of Melbourne) [www.avru.org](http://www.avru.org)  
Bushwalking Victoria Snakebite web resource [www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au](http://www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au)

### Document History

| Version | Document History | Approved by – Date                                |
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| 1       | <i>Approved</i>  | <i>Manager Aged &amp; Family – 1 October 2015</i> |
| 2       | Amended          | Manager Aged & Family 3 January 2018              |
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