

## **2022 Bush/Beach Kinder Extreme Weather Policy**

### **NQS: Quality Area 2**

#### **Purpose**

This policy aims to:

- Provide a framework around which well-informed decisions may be made by Parkdale Preschool to cancel Bush/Beach Kinder 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 Bush/Beach Kinder session
- Provide an appropriate mechanism for communication of session cancellations in extreme weather conditions
- Impress upon parents/guardians that they may be required to collect their child from a Bush/Beach Kinder session at any time in response to the weather conditions (or for any other reason)

#### **Policy statement**

##### **1. Values**

Parkdale Preschool is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for children participating in the Bush/Beach Kinder program
- Facilitating a Bush/Beach 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 communications to parents and guardians regarding weather conditions, cancellations or relocation of children in the event of extreme weather
- Respecting the rights of parents/guardians to remove their child from a Bush/Beach Kinder session at any time in response to the weather conditions (or for any other reason).

##### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to children, parents, staff, committee members, authorised persons, volunteers and students on placement working at Parkdale Preschool.

##### **3. Background and legislation**

Parkdale Preschool’s Bush/Beach 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 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 Bush/Beach 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:**

- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (National Law)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (The Regulations)
- National Quality Standard

**4. Definitions**

**Bureau of Meteorology:** Australia’s national weather, climate and water agency.  
Website: [www.bom.gov.au](http://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. Bush/Beach Kinder sessions will be cancelled (and the session will run as usual at Parkdale Preschool) if any of these determinants are met:

<b>Weather Condition</b>	<b>Extreme weather determinant causing cancellation</b>
<b>Forecast Temperature</b>	36 degrees Celsius or greater AND the kinder teacher decides that it would be appropriate to cancel Bush/Beach Kinder. Note: there is no pre-set minimum temperature. Thermals and clothing layers should be worn on very cold days. (Refer Protective Clothing Policy).
<b>Forecast wind speed</b>	In excess of 45km per hour AND the kinder teacher decides that it would be appropriate to cancel Bush/Beach Kinder.
<b>Forecast of electrical storm activity</b>	Thunder storm/electrical storm forecast

<b>Grounds flooded near or at Bush/Beach Kinder site</b>	On inspection by Bush/Beach Kinder educators
<b>BOM weather warnings of extreme storm conditions and excessive rainfall</b>	On warning issued by the Bureau of Meteorology.

**In addition to the above, Parkdale Preschool Committee has the discretion to cancel a session/s if it views the weather to be poor for Bush/Beach 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.

**Protective Clothing:** Refer to Bush/Beach Kinder Protective Clothing Policy (Bush/Beach Kinder Specific)

### **Kindergarten policies**

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

### **Procedures - General**

#### **The Committee is responsible for:**

- An extreme Weather Policy which gives clear guidelines to staff and parents about extreme conditions that will necessitate cancellation of a Bush/Beach Kinder session/s and provide guidance and procedures for staff in the event of extreme weather during a Bush/Beach Kinder 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 Bush/Beach Kinder session or if the group has been evacuated to a safe location in response to extreme weather.

#### **Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- Ensuring they are comfortable at all times with the forecast weather conditions while their child is attending a Bush/Beach Kinder 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 Bush/Beach Kinder session, they are able to collect their child at any time.

- 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)
- Parents must ensure they carry a mobile phone with them at all times while the Bush/Beach Kinder session is in progress. Mobile phones must be kept turned on at all times during a Bush/Beach Kinder session. Where a mobile 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.

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

In the case of forecast of extreme weather (see definition above) Parkdale Preschool will make the decision to cancel the Bush/Beach Kinder program for the session affected and continue the session at Parkdale Preschool.

**In addition to extreme weather determinants detailed in the table under “Definitions”, the Parkdale Preschool Committee of Management has the discretion to cancel the session if it views the weather to be unsuitable for Bush/Beach Kinder purposes.**

**If Bush Kinder is cancelled, the kinder session will be held at the Preschool.**

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

- Monitoring the weather forecast via the Bureau of Meteorology website the day prior to the session
- Making a determination to cancel or conduct the Bush/Beach Kinder session on the day prior to the session based on the weather forecast
- Providing notice to parents/guardians/staff of the status of the Bush/Beach Kinder session as follows;
  - By StoryPark update and/or communicated to families upon Drop-Off of the Bush/Beach Kinder Group as soon as possible and the determination is made
  - By 6pm the day before the session
  - This notice will confirm the cancellation of the Bush/Beach Kinder session
- Keeping their mobile phone with them on the day of the session to receive notice of cancellation in cases of extreme weather updates which necessitate cancellation
- **Note that a Bush/Beach Kinder session may be cancelled at short notice or at any other time and communicated to families upon Drop-Off to Parkdale Preschool**

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- Collecting their child at any time during the session if they are not comfortable with the weather conditions.
- Collecting their child as soon as possible where staff have determined and communicated to parents the extreme weather event and action taken
- Keeping their mobile phone with them on the 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 each of the weather conditions listed below:

Weather Conditions	Staff Actions
<p><b>Heat</b> Risks include sunburn, heat stress, heat stroke and dehydration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monitor children for heat exhaustion/heat stroke (<b>see Attachment 1</b> 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 by parents at the start of the session</li> <li>● Ensure appropriate protective clothing, including hats (Refer Protective Clothing Policy.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rain/Hail/Cold</b> Risks include child getting wet (and onset of hypothermia) Injury from hailstones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monitor children for wet clothes and change if necessary.</li> <li>● Ensure appropriate wet weather clothing is worn.</li> <li>● Encourage wearing of appropriate clothing, including gloves, scarves, beanies etc.</li> <li>● Seek shelter at Assembly Point in heavy rain or in hail (<b>See Attachment 3</b>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Electrical storm activity/Lightning</b> 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 undercover shelter at Assembly Point (<b>See Attachment 3</b>)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>See Attachment 2</b> for Lightning Safety Fact Sheet</li> </ul>
<p><b>High Winds</b> Risks include falling trees/tree limbs, blowing particles (sand, dirt) into eyes. Bush/Beach 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 at Assembly Point if necessary (<b>See Attachment 3</b>)</li> <li>● Any equipment/structures must be moved by at least two staff/volunteers to minimise risk of injury</li> <li>● If the Bush/Beach Kinder site is to be changed, 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 parents/guardians in the event that a child is ill or injured in accordance with the Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Policy.

### **Procedures for Relocating to a Safe Position – Relocation Safe Zones**

<b>Weather conditions</b>	<b>Shelter Location</b>
<b>Hail, torrential rain, electrical storm, lightning, extreme winds</b>	Bush Kinder - Seek shelter at Cheltenham Train Station Beach Kinder - Seek shelter at picnic tables next to Parkdale Cafe and Kiosk

If conditions necessitate evacuation from these sites, follow the procedures in the Emergency Evacuation Policy (Bush/Beach Kinder Specific).

**If the Bush/Beach Kinder group is required to relocate to a safe position in response to changed weather conditions, the following procedures are to be followed by staff (with the assistance of volunteer helpers).**

1. Blow whistle 3 times
2. Reassure children and maintain calm
3. Ensure sign-in sheet is in the teacher’s backpack along with other necessary items, such as medication

4. Count/check off against the sign-in sheet to ensure all children, volunteers and staff are accounted for
5. With the exception of the teacher's backpack, leave Bush/Beach Kinder gear at the site for collection later when it is safe to do so.
6. En route to new location (please see Attachment 3 for evacuation routes and alternate sites), calmly walk children in pairs, keep group close together and ensure no child deviates from the group.
7. Teachers/adult volunteers to be positioned at the front and back of the group and flanking the group where possible.
8. Notify Emergency Services if required.
9. On arrival at safe assembly point, conduct a full count/roll call to ensure all children are accounted for
10. Wait for the extreme weather to pass and when it does, resume normal activities, following same relocation procedures to return to the Bush/Beach Kinder site.
11. If the weather does not look like it will pass soon, a broadcast StoryPark message should be sent to all parents, advising of the safe relocation to Parkdale Preschool.

## **Evaluation**

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the committee of management will:

- Seek feedback regarding this policy and its implementation with parents of children participating in the Bush/Beach Kinder program. This can be facilitated through discussions with staff.
- 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.

## **Attachments**

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

Attachment 2: Lightning Safety Fact Sheet

Attachment 3: Bush/Beach Kinder Site Map Showing Safe Relocation Zones In The Event Of Extreme Weather.

Attachment 4: Bush/Beach Kinder transport route.

## Attachment 1:

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

Victoria Better Health Channel ([www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/heat](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/heat))

**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 present 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
- Fan if possible
- Drink cool water if not vomiting
- 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



## Attachment 2

### Lightning Safety Fact Sheet

Source: Victorian State Government – Education and training  
([www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au))

If thunder happens within 30 seconds of lightning, then the storm is within 10 kilometres of your location. Lightning safety experts consider this the strike danger zone and advise people to follow the 30/30 rule.

#### The 30/30 Rule

Follow the precautions outlined below when thunder is heard within 30 seconds of a lightning flash and wait for 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard to resume your activity. If you're unable to take shelter inside, find the safest accessible location and stay there until the storm has passed.

#### General precautions:

- Stay away from metal poles, fences, clothes lines etc.
- Never ride horses, bicycles or drive in open vehicles.
- If driving, slow down or park away from trees, power lines or other objects that may be damaged by storm activity.
- Stay inside metal-bodied (hard top) vehicles or caravans but do not touch any metal sections.
- If undertaking water activities, leave the water immediately.
- Discard all metal objects.

#### If shelter is near-by:

- Seek shelter in a hard top vehicle or solid building. Avoid small structures or fabric tents.
- Keep clear of windows.

#### If shelter is not available:

- Crouch (alone, feet together), preferably in a hollow. Make yourself a small target.
- Remove metal objects from head/body.
- Do not lie down (the more of you that is in contact with the ground, the more 'attractive' you are to lightning) but avoid being highest object.
- If your hair stands on end or you hear buzzing on nearby rocks, fences etc, move immediately. At night, a blue glow may show if an object is about to be struck.
- Stay away from high and low points (hilltops, ridges & gullies), rock overhangs and shallow caves.
- Keep out of, and well away from, water bodies or watercourses.
- Never shelter under tree/s.
- Make sure the group is aware of the Lightning Safe Position. This involves:
  - Squatting or crouching with knees drawn up and feet together, preferably on dry insulating material (eg. foam mat).



- o Keeping hands off the ground.
- o Spread group members out – about ten metres apart, but within calling distance.

**First aid**

- Apply immediate CPR to lightning victims until medical help arrives. (You won't receive a shock from the victim.)






For further information contact the State Emergency Service office.  
[www.ses.vic.gov.au](http://www.ses.vic.gov.au)

**Attachment 3**

Bush/Beach Kinder Site Map Showing Safe Relocation Sites In The Event Of Extreme Weather






**BUSH KINDER**



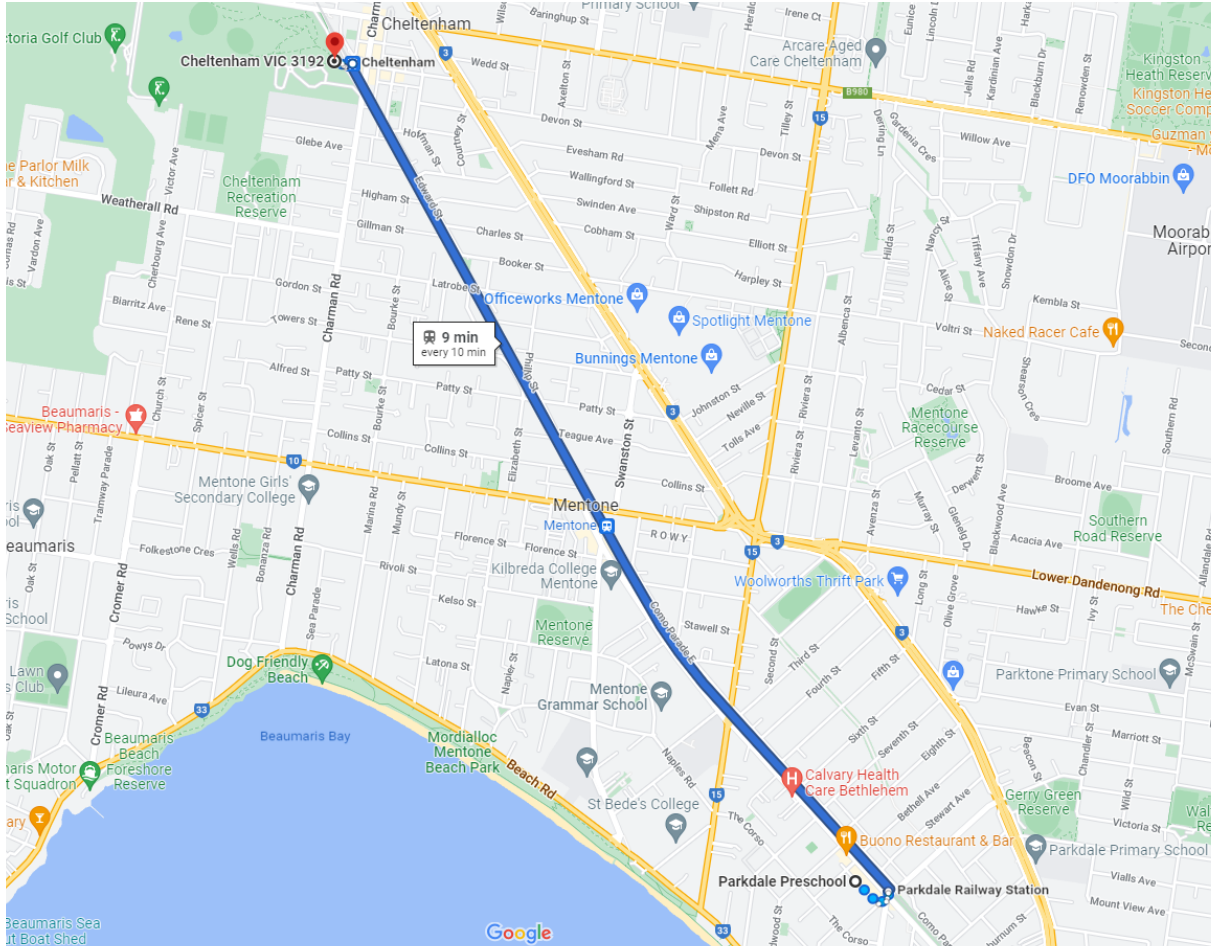
KEY	
Safe Relocation Site	
Assembly Point	
Evacuation Routes	
Emergency Pick-Up Area	
Bush Kinder Base	

## BEACH KINDER

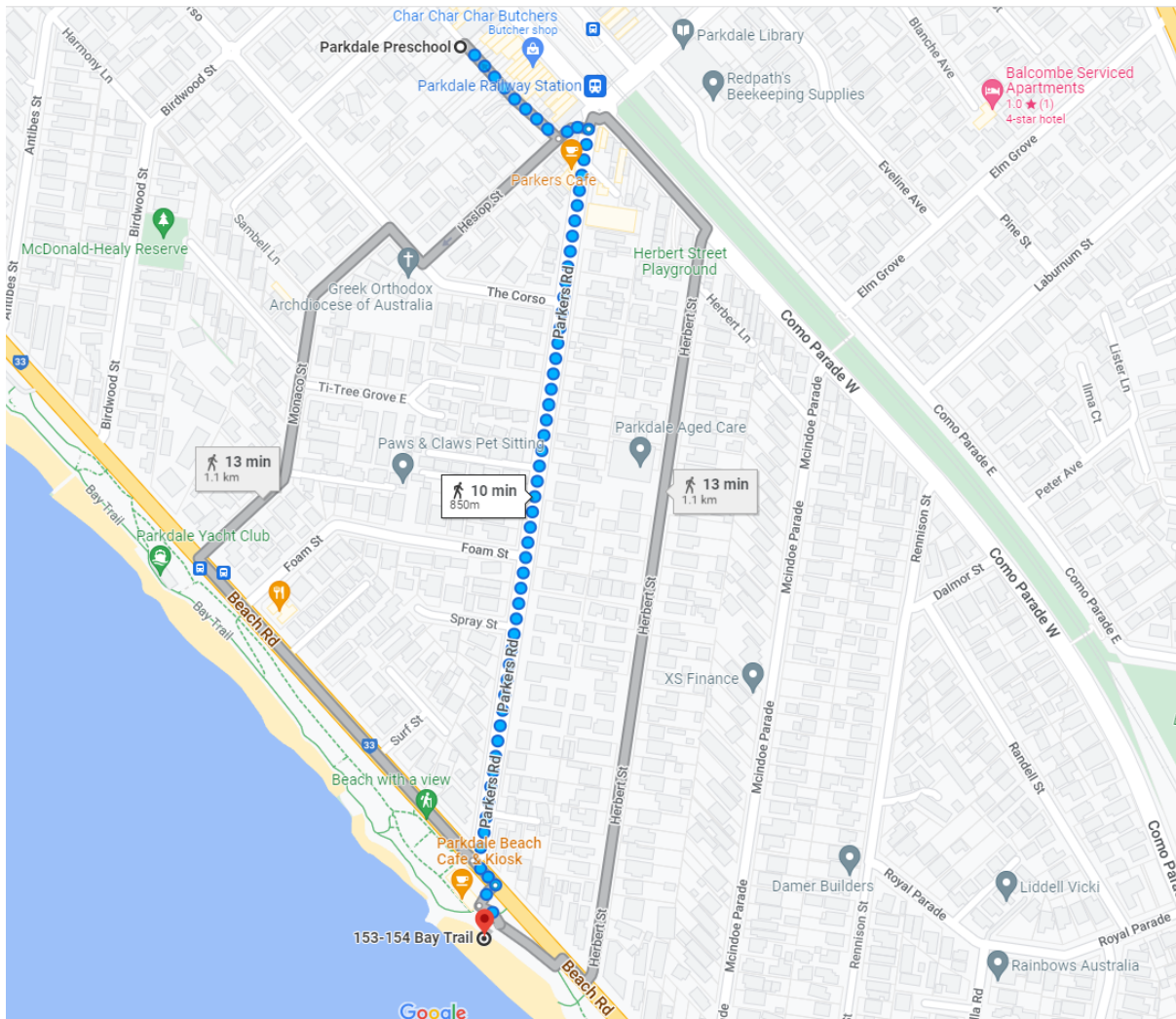


KEY	
Safe Relocation Site	
Assembly Point	
Evacuation Routes	
Emergency Pick-Up Area	
Beach Kinder Base	

## Attachment 4: Bush/Beach Kinder Transport Route BUSH KINDER



## BEACH KINDER



### Authorisation

Endorsed by the Parkdale Preschool Committee of Management in March 2022.

**Review Date:** February 2023

