

# Yarram Early Learning Dog Awareness Policy

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

## PURPOSE

This policy will provide clear guidelines to ensure that:

- Procedures for dealing with dogs off lead that may enter the Bush Kinder space.
- Guidelines for dealing with an angry or threatening dog and/or a dog in attack mode.
- The appropriate medical response to dog bites.
- A framework for the appropriate education and training of children, staff, parents, and children on how to live safely with dogs at Yarram Early Learning.

## POLICY STATEMENT

### VALUES

Yarram Early Learning Incorporated is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for children and staff participating in the Nature Program.
- Being respectful of the community space that the Nature Program sites offers, including an awareness of dogs being walked 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 the Nature Program.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Yarram Early Learning Incorporated.

## BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

### BACKGROUND

Yarram Early Learning's Nature Program is conducted in community park and wetlands which allows dogs to be walked off lead in designated areas. 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 AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Education and Care Services National Law 2010.
- National Quality Standards, including Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety

and Quality Area 3 – Physical environment.

- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004.
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007.

## DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g., Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

### Safe behaviour around dogs:

The following rules are recommended by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries 'Living Safely with Dogs' 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.
  - • 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 (do not 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

## SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### SOURCES

Better Health Channel Website: Child Safety 'Children & Animals'

Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries 'Living Safely with Dogs' Education Program

### SERVICE POLICIES

- *Nature Program Extreme Weather Policy (Nature Program specific).*
- *Nature Program Identification and Visibility Policy (Nature Program specific).*
- *Nature Program Emergency Evacuation Policy (Nature Program specific).*
- *Nature Program Snake Awareness Policy (Nature Program specific).*
- *Nature Program Protective Clothing Policy (Nature Program specific).*
- *Child Safe Environment Policy.*
- *Emergency and Evacuation Policy.*
- *Excursions and Incursion Policy.*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Policy.*
- *Supervision of Children Policy.*

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

### ***The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor are responsible for:***

- Running a 'Living Safely with Dogs' education session for each four-year-old kinder group, parents, and staff at the beginning of the year. Particular attention in the session is given 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.
- Supplying a First Aid Kit on site throughout Nature 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 the children on an ongoing basis how to behave around dogs to minimise risk of dog bites.
- Ensuring teachers/educators 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).

### ***Responsible Person and Educators are responsible for:***

- 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.
- Follow procedures in the event of a dog in attack mode.
- Ensuring incidents are reported in log.
- 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 Nature Program 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 from the Nature Program site and put the dog on a lead.
  - ii. If an aggressive and threatening dog enters the Nature Program 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 Nature Program site.
  - iii. If a dog attacks a child:
    - Teachers/educators will follow current first aid practice. This practice will be informed by up-to-date Level 2 First Aid Training.
    - Teachers/educators are to follow procedures as set out in Incident, Illness, Trauma & Illness Policy, including contacting parent, calling ambulance, logging incidents etc.

### **Parents/guardians 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 'Living Safely with Dogs' 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.

### **EVALUATION**

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person will:

- Regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness.
- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints, and incidents in relation to this policy.
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy, and best practice.
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required.
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

### **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the Yarram Early Learning Incorporated in April 2021

**REVIEW DATE:** April 2022