

Yarram Early Learning Protective Clothing

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

PURPOSE

This policy aims to clearly define:

- Set out clear guidelines for parents/guardians, teachers, and educators regarding appropriate clothing to be worn by children attending Nature Program in various weather conditions to ensure their safety and wellbeing (including a description of clothing which should not be worn).
- Provide clear guidelines regarding the change of clothes required for Nature Program participants.
- Provide an appropriate mechanism for communication of the protective clothing requirements for the Nature Program sessions to parents/guardians.

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Yarram Early Learning Incorporated is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for children participating in the Nature Program.
- Facilitating a Nature Program 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.
- Ensuring clothing worn by children in the program allows for maximum comfort, free movement and does not obstruct the children in participating in their activities in the Nature Program setting.
- Facilitating communication to parents to ensure compliance with this policy.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, parents/guardians, staff, Committee Members, authorised persons, volunteers, and students on placement working at Yarram Early Learning.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

Yarram Early Learning's Nature Program is intended to operate across a broad spectrum of weather conditions, allowing 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. For this reason, there are some particular clothing requirements in the Nature Program setting that may differ from requirements in a Centre-based environment.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation may include but is 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

Protective and appropriate clothing & footwear: It is important that Bush Kinder participants wear appropriate and protective clothing and footwear which:

- Allows children to move freely and undertake activities such as climbing, balancing, running, puddle jumping.
- Keeps children warm and dry in cold/wet weather.
- Protects children from the damaging effects of the sun, UV rays in warm weather and high UV conditions.
- Prevents sunburn, bites, scratches, and stings (even in warm weather, long sleeve tops and long pants are recommended - this clothing should be loose fitting and light).
- Where possible, is made from natural fabrics which allow breathability and is comfortable against the skin.
- In the case of footwear, keeps feet and toes covered and has a flexible and gripped sole to allow children to climb and balance on uneven surfaces. The following table provides examples of recommended clothing, clothing which is not recommended and unacceptable clothing:

	Warm weather	Cold weather/rain
Recommended clothing and footwear	Light, loose fitting long sleeve tops and long pants, broad brimmed or legionnaires hat, closed toe shoes.	Waterproofs*, long pants, long sleeved top, beanie, waterproof gloves, thermals in very cold weather.
Not recommended	Short sleeved tops, long skirts or dresses, shorts.	Skirts, dresses (incompatible with waterproofs).
Unacceptable clothing and footwear	Open toe shoes, sandals, thongs, crocs, singlet tops.	Non-waterproof clothing. (waterproofs on top of nonwaterproofed clothing is acceptable).

*Waterproofs provided by Yarram Early Learning.

Change of clothes: All children participating in the Nature Program are required to bring a change of clothes and footwear as these may become wet and muddy. It is recommended that the spare clothing include:

- Spare top and bottoms of appropriate thickness/weight for the weather on the day.
- Spare underpants (and singlet in winter).
- 2 pairs of socks.
- 1 pair of boots.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SERVICE POLICIES

- Nature Program Delivery & Collection of Children Policy (Nature Program specific).
- Nature Program Extreme Weather Policy (Nature Program specific).
- Nature Program Protective Clothing Policy (Nature Program specific).
- Nature Program Emergency Evacuation Policy (Nature Program specific).
- Nature Program Snake Awareness Policy (Nature Program specific).
- Nature Program Dog Awareness Policy (Nature Program specific).
- Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Policy.
- Supervision of Children Policy.
- Excursion & Incursion Policy.
- Clothing Policy.
- Sun Protection Policy.
- Water Safety Policy.
- Occupational Health & Safety Policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor are responsible for:

- Implementing and maintaining a Protective Clothing Policy which provides clarity to parents/guardians and staff as to the appropriate clothing children are required to wear to the Nature Program in various weather conditions to ensure their safety and wellbeing (including a description of clothing which should not be worn).
- All parents/guardians being aware of this policy and provided access to the policy at all times.
- Supplying waterproofs.
- Ensuring staff are appropriately educated on procedures in the event that children are not wearing compliant clothing.
- Ensuring the Nature Program 'kit' contains waterproof clothing.

Responsible Person and Educators are responsible for:

- Ensuring all children being dropped off Yarram Early Learning are wearing appropriate clothing in line with this policy. If inappropriate clothing is worn, teachers and educators are to:
 - Highlight to the parent dropping off the child which clothing is inappropriate and the reasons for it.
 - Determine if the change of clothing brought by that child is appropriate and change the clothes on the child if need be.
 - If the clothing has the potential to put the child's safety and wellbeing at risk and there is no suitable alternative clothing, inform parent/guardian that the child is not able to attend the Nature Program and give them the opportunity to provide clothing that is appropriate.
- Assisting with changing the child's clothing if need be.
- Encouraging children to tell a teacher or educator if they need help with clothing or feel uncomfortable.
- During orientation sessions, advising parents of the clothing requirements for the Nature Program.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Ensuring protective and appropriate clothing is worn to the Nature Program by their child in line with this policy.
- Changing their child's clothing as instructed by the teacher or educator to enable their child to participate in the Nature Program session if required.
- Ensure their child's change of clothes includes items as set out in this policy.
- Reading and being familiar with the policy.
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both teachers and educators.
- Changing children into and out of the waterproofs at the start and end of each session.

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.

Reviewed by committee – August 2023.

To be reviewed – August 2025.