

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thornbury Kindergarten Inc.</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</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>

## PURPOSE

This policy aims to:

- Provide a framework around which well-informed decisions may be made by Thornbury Kindergarten staff to cancel or relocate a Bush Kinder session, an Out & About outing or other excursion in response to forecast weather conditions, and ensure that parents/carers 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, an Out & About outing or other excursion.
- Provide an appropriate mechanism for communication of session cancellations or relocations in extreme weather conditions.
- Impress upon parents/carers that they may collect their child from a session at any time in response to the weather conditions (or for any other reason) for example a risk of thunderstorm asthma or high pollen forecast.

## POLICY STATEMENT

### 2. VALUES

Thornbury Kindergarten is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for children participating in the Kinder program.
- Facilitating playful, learning experiences 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 resources to enable well-informed decisions to be made regarding weather conditions eg. BOM website or the Victorian Emergency app.
- 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/carers to remove their child from a session at any time in response to the weather conditions (or for any other reason).

### 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day to Day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Thornbury Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.

### 4. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Thornbury Kindergarten's programs are 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 many environments. 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 decisions to re-locate, modify or cancel sessions in response to forecast extreme weather conditions. We ensure appropriate communication channels are in place to inform families. It also provides a framework for staff in the event that extreme weather conditions arise during a session and provides procedures for effective action to be taken.

Thornbury Kindergarten holds the safety of children as paramount and decisions for the most effective action to be taken are always given the most serious consideration.

Relevant legislation includes but is not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 123, 355, 357, 360
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
- National Asthma Council, thunderstorm asthma fact sheet  
<https://www.nationalasthma.org.au/living-with-asthma/resources/patients-carers/factsheets/thunderstorm-asthma>

### 5. 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 the PolicyWorks manual provided in each foyer.

**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)

**Thunderstorm Asthma warning**: Spring thunderstorm weather that can cause pollen grains to burst and can trigger an asthma attack.

**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.

Weather Condition	Extreme weather determinant causing cancellation or relocation
Forecast temperature	36 degrees Celsius or greater <b>AND</b> Lead Teacher decides that it would be appropriate to cancel or relocate the session or planned outing.  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	> 45km per hour <b>AND</b> Lead Teacher decides that it would be appropriate to cancel or relocate the bush kinder session or planned outing
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

The Thornbury Kindergarten Committee and staff have the discretion to cancel, modify or relocate a Bush Kinder session, an Out & About outing or other excursion if it views the weather to be poor for program 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 or relocation.

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

Protective Clothing: Refer to *Protective Clothing Policy*

## 6. SOURCES AND RELATED CENTRE POLICIES

### Centre policies

- Protective Clothing
- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- Emergency Evacuation (Bush Kinder specific)
- Delivery & Collection of Children (Bush Kinder specific)
- Incident and medical emergency management
- Communication

## PROCEDURES

**The Approved Provider is responsible for:**

- An Extreme Weather Policy which gives clear guidelines to staff and parents about extreme conditions that will necessitate cancellation, modification or relocation of a

Bush Kinder session, an Out & About outing or other excursion and provides guidance and procedures for staff in the event of extreme weather during a session.

- All parents/carers 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) prior to a Bush Kinder session, an Out & About outing or other excursion.
- Notifying relevant Thornbury Kindergarten staff if it determines that a Bush Kinder session, an Out & About outing or other excursion should be cancelled, modified or relocated due to extreme weather.
- Ensuring communication channels are in place to facilitate notification to parents/carers in the event of a relocation or cancellation of a Bush Kinder session, an Out & About outing or other excursion or if the group has been evacuated to a safe location in response to extreme weather conditions.

**Parents/carers are responsible for:**

- Ensuring they are comfortable at all times with the forecast weather conditions, while their child is attending a Bush Kinder session, an Out & About outing or other excursion. If for whatever reason, a parent/carer 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.
- 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/carers the extreme weather event has required the session cancellation.
- 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, or an authorised nominee, are contactable at all times while their child's kinder session is in progress.
- Monitoring communication regarding the upcoming kinder session.
- Reading and being familiar with the policy.
- Being aware of the forecast weather conditions for the kinder session.
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee.

**In the event of forecast extreme or bad weather (decision PRIOR to session)**

The below procedure refers to decision being made between 24 hours and up to 1 hour prior to the commencement of the session.

In cases of forecast extreme weather (see definition above), Thornbury Kindergarten staff will make the decision to cancel, modify or relocate the Bush Kinder session, an Out & About outing or other excursion. .

The Committee and 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, outing or excursion
- Making a decision to cancel, relocate or modify the planned session, outing or excursion based on the weather forecast. These decisions are to be made in the best

interests of the children's wellbeing. The most suitable course of action for the affected session could be:

- Relocating to an alternative location
- Modifying the activities undertaken in the Bush Kinder session, Out and About outing or excursion to suit the weather conditions and the children's wellbeing.
- Providing a notice to parents/carers/staff of the status of the affected session/s as follows:
  - By broadcast email and/or SMS to the Kinder group as soon as the decision is made
  - Note that a kinder session may be cancelled or modified at short notice or any other time by broadcast email and/or SMS based on updated weather information.
- Contacting the affected staff members, including home kinder staff whose session may be affected by the relocation of the affected session, outing or excursion.

**In the event of weather becoming extreme during a session (decision DURING 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 (36 degrees Celsius or greater) <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>● Staff ensure regular rest breaks are taken by children when required.</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> <li>● Consider length / duration of walks during warmer months (ie. February / March).</li> </ul>
Rain/Hail/Cold Risks include child getting wet (and onset of hypothermia), injury from hailstones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monitor children for wet clothing and change if necessary.</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> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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 <i>Relocation Procedures</i> 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 <i>Relocation Procedures</i> 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>

- Thornbury Kindergarten holds the safety of children as paramount and decisions around weather conditions are always given the most serious consideration. Thornbury Kindergarten staff have the discretion to cancel or relocate the session's activities if it views the weather to be unsuitable for program purposes.
- In the event of illness or injury during a session as a result of weather conditions, the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy must be followed.
- Contacting parent/carer in the event that a child is ill or injured in accordance with the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy .

### Relocating to a Safe Position during session

If conditions necessitate evacuation from the Darebin Parklands, follow procedures in the *Bush Kinder – Emergency Evacuation Policy*.

Relocation Safe Zones:

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

If conditions necessitate evacuation during an Out and About outing or excursion, follow procedures detailed in the excursion specific risk management plan.

### General Procedures for relocating

- Blow whistle.

- Keep children calm.
- Lead Teacher to assemble children
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Teacher to collect evacuation backpack and ensure it contains sign-in sheet along with other necessary items such as medication
- Educator to collect first aid back pack
- Lead Teacher to Count/check off against the sign-in sheet to ensure all children are accounted for, 2<sup>nd</sup> teacher to verify.
- En route to new location, 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 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 collection purposes, if required.

## **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/carers of children participating in the 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.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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

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

*Attachment 3: Bush Kinder specific relocation framework and procedures*

*Attachment 4: Bush Kinder site map showing safe relocation zones in the event of extreme weather.*

## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was approved by the committee of management of Thornbury Kindergarten at a committee meeting 12 December 2019.

**REVIEW DATE:       DECEMBER 2022**

## ATTACHMENT 1

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

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/HealthyLiving/heat-stress-and-heat-related-illness> 2015 (accessed 05/07/19) **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 and requires urgent attention. 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
- Increase fluid intake if fully conscious
- Seek medical advice

What to do for heat stroke

- Call an ambulance (000)
  - Get the person to a cool area and lie them down
  - Remove clothing and wet skin with water, fanning continuously
  - DO NOT give fluids to drink
  - Position an unconscious person on their side and clear the airway
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## ATTACHMENT 2

### LIGHTNING SAFETY FACT SHEET

Source: Victorian State Government – Education and Training: Excursion Emergency Management ([www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)) 07 February 2019

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.
- Never ride horses, bicycles or drive in open vehicles.
  - 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, 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 and gullies), rock overhangs and shallow caves.
- Keep out of, and well away from, water bodies or watercourses.
- 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 (foam mat)/li>
  - keeping hands off the ground.
- Spread group members out – about ten metres apart, but within calling distance.
- Never shelter under tree/s.

## **First aid**

Call 000

Apply immediate CPR to lightning victims until medical help arrives.

## **ATTACHMENT 3**

### *Bush Kinder specific relocation framework and procedures*

#### **In the event of forecast extreme or bad weather (decision PRIOR to session)**

The below procedure refers to decisions being made between 24 hours and upto 1 hour prior to the commencement of the session.

In cases of forecast extreme weather (see definition above), Thornbury Kindergarten will make the decision to cancel or relocate the Bush Kinder program for the session(s) 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 decision to cancel or relocate the bush kinder sessions the next day based on the weather forecast
- Providing a notice to parents/carers/staff of the status of the Bush Kinder session/s as follows:
  - By broadcast email and/or SMS to the Bush Kinder group as soon as possible the determination is made
  - Note that a bush kinder session may be cancelled at short notice or any other time by broadcast email and/or SMS based on updated weather information.

Staff are responsible for:

- Providing a notice of the cancellation or relocation to the Darebin Parklands Ranger as a matter of courtesy (Refer Bush Kinder Contact Sheet for contact details)
- Making a determination of the most suitable location for the relocated Bush Kinder session, being:
  - Darebin Parklands BBQ shelter (with permission of Darebin Parklands Ranger)
  - Penders Grove Primary School (if available)
  - Thornbury Kindergarten (if BBQ shelter and Penders Grove Primary School are unavailable or unsuitable)
- Contacting Penders Grove Primary School Principal to determine the availability of the school as a possible location for the Bush Kinder session.
- Contacting the affected staff members, including home kinder staff whose session may be affected by the relocation of the Bush Kinder session to home kinder.
- Providing a notice to families regarding the location of the Bush Kinder session, including families of impacted home kinder sessions (if required).

#### **In the event of weather becoming extreme during a session (decision DURING 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
<p>Heat</p> <p><i>Risks include sunburn, heat stress, heat stroke, dehydration</i></p>	<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>• Staff provide regular rest breaks.</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> <li>• Staff to consider length / duration of walks during warmer months (ie. February / March).</li> </ul>
<p>Rain/Hail/Cold</p> <p>Risks include child getting wet (and onset of hypothermia), injury from hailstones</p>	<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 <i>Relocation Procedures</i> 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 <i>Relocation Procedures</i> below].</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>
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- Thornbury Kindergarten holds the safety of children as paramount and decisions around weather conditions are always given the most serious consideration. Thornbury Kindergarten staff have the discretion to cancel or relocate the session's activities if it views the weather to be unsuitable for program purposes.
- In the event of illness or injury during a session as a result of weather conditions, the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy and Dealing With Medical Conditions Policy must be followed.
- Contacting parent/carer in the event that a child is ill or injured in accordance with the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy and Dealing With Medical Conditions Policy.

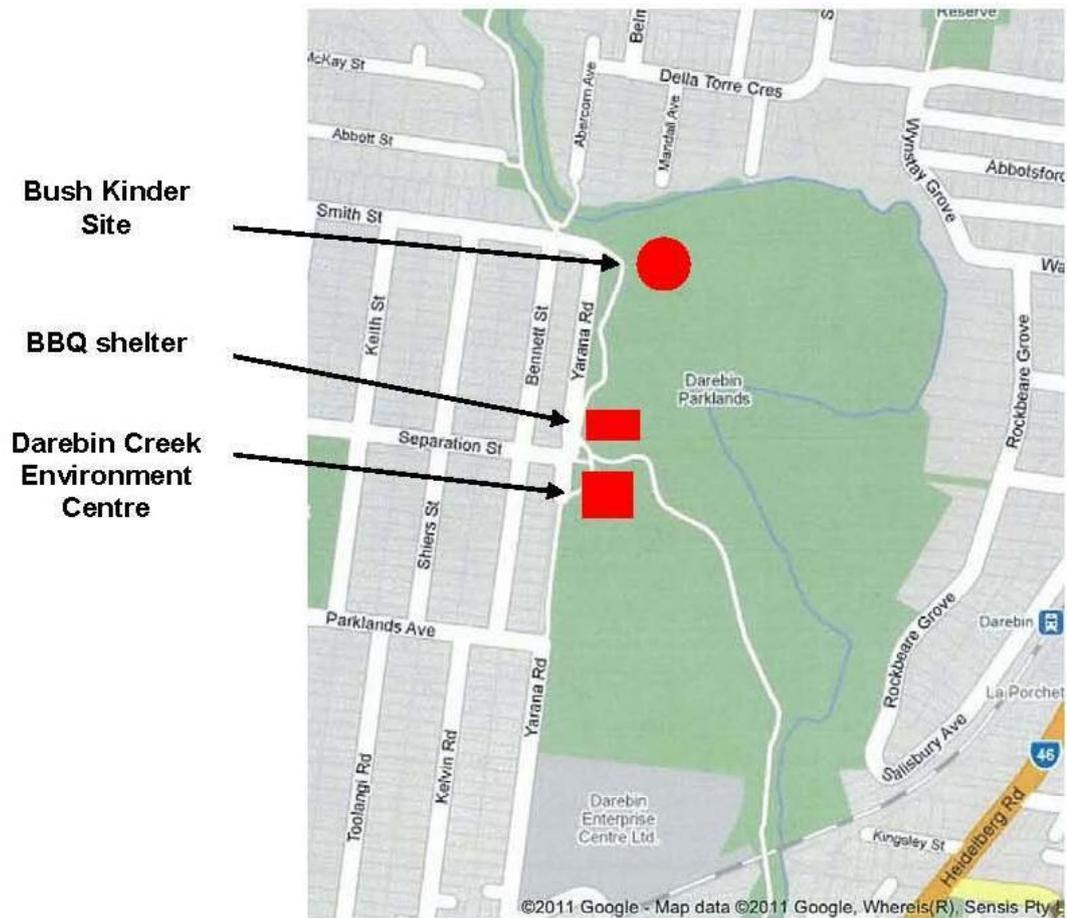
If the Bush Kinder group is required to relocate to a safe position in response to the weather conditions, the following procedures are to be followed by staff (with the assistance of volunteers):

- Blow whistle.
- Keep children calm.
- Lead Teacher to assemble children
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Teacher to collect bush kinder backpack and ensure it contains sign-in sheet along with other necessary items such as medication
- Educator to collect first aid back pack
- Lead Teacher to Count/check off against the sign-in sheet to ensure all children are accounted for, 2<sup>nd</sup> teacher to verify.
- With the exception of the teacher's backpack and first aid kit, 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.

## ATTACHMENT 4

### 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)*