

SNAKE AWARENESS POLICY

Family Day Care Services may have FDC educators operating an early childcare education and care service located in bush settings or visit bush settings as part of their educational program where it is known snakes may be active and present. Snakes are most prevalent during spring or summer but could be encountered at any time of the year- especially on sunny days.

Unprovoked, snakes rarely attack humans and are generally shy, timid animals that will avoid conflict if given the opportunity. Snakes are protected under the Nature Conservation Act 1992, and it is an offence to kill or injure them. The greatest risk of snake bite from venomous snakes is from people trying to kill or handle them.

Our Family Day Care Scheme is committed to ensuring our FDC educators provide a safe and healthy environment for children whilst being respectful of wildlife in and around our environment. We aim to minimise the potential risk of injury from a snake bite by educating children and FDC educators about the risks associated with snakes.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

QUALITY AREA 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
12	Meaning of serious incident
85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
89	First Aid Kits
97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
98	Telephone or other communication equipment
100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

Victorian Child Safe Standards	
Standard 1	Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued
Standard 2	Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
Standard 3	Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
Standard 4	Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
Standard 5	Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
Standard 6	People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
Standard 7	Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
Standard 8	Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
Standard 9	Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
Standard 10	Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved
Standard 11	Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

RELATED POLICIES

Administration of First Aid Policy Emergency Evacuation Policy Family Communication Policy Health and Safety Policy	Incident, Incident, Trauma and Illness Policy Supervision Policy Work Health and Safety Policy
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PURPOSE

We aim to ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children and FDC educators from harm and hazards likely to cause injury, including the potential risk from snake bites. This policy aims to define the risks of snakes within environments in Family Day Care residences and approved venues, the necessary strategies implemented to minimise the risk of snake bites and the appropriate medical response if required.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Coordinator, Educators, Educator Assistants, children, families, and visitors of the Family Day Care Service.

SNAKES

Australia has around 170 species of land snakes, some equipped with venom more toxic than any other snakes in the world. Some of the most dangerous snakes belong to the front-fanged group including- the tiger snake, brown snake, eastern taipan, death adder and mulga or king brown snake. Although less venomous than many other Australian snakes, the red-bellied black snake is quite common in urban areas of NSW. Snake bites can be potentially fatal so immediate medical assistance should be sought for all cases of suspected snake bite.

Snakes are not naturally aggressive and always prefer to retreat. They will only attack humans if hurt or provoked. People are most likely to be bitten when attempting to kill or handle a snake.

IMPLEMENTATION

NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/COORDINATOR WILL:

- assist FDC educators to conduct a risk assessment to identify the potential risk of encountering a snake on the Family Day Care Service premises or approved venue
- assist in developing an emergency plan and procedure to include the response if encountering a snake and emergency first aid required in case of a snake bite
- provide a snake identification chart for snakes found in our local area for FDC educators and any support staff

- ensure all FDC educators and educator assistants have current emergency first aid training
- provide updates and information each 'snake season' of immobilisation techniques
- ensure educators display an emergency action plan in a prominent location should a snake bite occur
- ensure all FDC services have fully stocked First Aid Kits containing compression bandages
- ensure FDC educators conduct daily inspections of the outdoor and indoor learning environment prior to children arriving at the Family Day Care Service
- ensure lawns and gardens are well maintained at each residence and approved venue
- request educators cut any long grass around the boundaries of the premises
- ensure snake habitats such as piles of timber, compost heaps or sheets of galvanized iron are removed from around the premise
- ensure clean surroundings around any animal housing/cages to reduce any potential mice population (a food source for snakes) are maintained
- ensure any chicken or other animal enclosures are reptile proof
- ensure pet food and water bowls are not accessible to wildlife
- provide information to educators to give to families about snake awareness and recommended responses if encountering a snake
- ensure children are educated about how to respond to a snake sighting or encounter at the residence or when participating on an excursion
- ensure FDC educators have the contact number of Wires or other licensed snake handler readily available to assist in rescuing the snake if the snake cannot return to its natural environment- [for example the snake is located in a garden shed or storage container; the snake is located inside and is unable to exit the building/premises]
- follow procedures for notification of a serious incident to the regulatory authority in the unlikely event of an educator or child being bitten by a snake
- complete an *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* in the event of a snake bite
- ensure all FDC educators, educator assistants and other staff wear enclosed footwear at all times.

FDC EDUCATORS AND EDUCATOR ASSISTANTS WILL:

- collaborate with the Nominated Supervisor/Coordinator to conduct risk assessments for potential risk of snakes in their environment
- examine the Family Day Care Service grounds during their daily indoor and outdoor safety checks to ensure no snakes are sighted

- ensure no animal food or water is left out for wildlife overnight
- ensure lawns and gardens are well maintained at each residence and approved venue
- ensure snake habitats such as piles of timber, compost heaps or sheets of galvanized iron are removed from around the residence or venue
- ensure emergency evacuation policies and procedures are in place in case of a snake encounter or snake bite
- ensure emergency First Aid training is current
- ensure the first aid kit is easily accessible and contains compression bandages
- always leave snakes alone
- be aware of snake species inhabiting the local area
- notify the Nominated Supervisor/Coordinator if a snake has been sighted within the FDC residence environment
- wear adequate clothing and enclosed shoes at all times
- educate children about snakes and snake bite prevention behaviours
- ensure children are reminded on a regular basis that if they encounter a snake, to move away quietly and report the sighting to the FDC educator
- educate children not to put their hands into hollow logs or rock crevices.

ENCOUNTERING A SNAKE

If a snake is sighted or encountered the FDC educator and educator assistant will:

- inform children to move away quietly
- remove all children from the immediate area, or evacuate the room until snake is removed if indoors
- isolate this area until the snake is removed or moves
- note the location of the snake
- if possible, monitor the snake from a safe distance (at least 5 metres away)
- if snake remains and is perceived to be a threat, contact local snake handler or Wildlife Victoria
- if indoors, close doors to the room and place towels along the bottom of the doors so the snake cannot move to another area and wait for snake handler to remove the snake
- **do not** approach the snake or try to contain it

EMERGENCY SNAKE BITE ACTION PLAN

- Conduct a primary survey of the area – do not attempt to catch or kill the snake
- Stay calm and call for help- have someone call 000 for an ambulance
- Reassure the child/adult and encourage them to keep calm and still
- Immediately apply a firm bandage over the bite marks or scratches
- Apply Pressure Immobilisation Technique (see Appendix 1)
- Maintain continued pressure and immobilise ensuring the child/adult does not move
- Rest and reassure the patient
- Do not take off clothing
- Do not wash bite as a venom sample can be used to identify the snake
- Do not cut or suck the bite to drain venom
- Do not apply a tourniquet
- Be prepared- resuscitation may be required

FAMILIES WILL:

- familiarise themselves with the *Snake Awareness Policy*
- ensure their child wears closed shoes when attending Family Day Care
- reinforce snake awareness behaviours with their child- especially during 'snake season'
- provide feedback to the Service regarding this policy for review and improvement.

APPENDIX 1

Pressure immobilisation bandage

A pressure immobilisation bandage is recommended for anyone bitten by a venomous snake. This involves firmly bandaging the area of the body involved, such as the arm or leg, and keeping the person calm and still until medical help arrives.

Follow these steps to apply a pressure immobilisation bandage:

- First put a pressure bandage over the bite itself. It should be tight, and you should not be able to easily slide a finger between the bandage and the skin.
- Then use a heavy crepe or elasticised roller bandage to immobilise the whole limb. Start just above the fingers or toes of the bitten limb and move upwards on the limb as far as the body. Splint the limb including joints on either side of the bite.
- Keep the person and the limb completely at rest. If possible, mark the site of the bite on the bandage with a pen.

(Source: Australian Government, *health direct*)

Poster

First aid fact sheet Snake bite St John Ambulance



First aid fact sheet

Snake bite

All known or suspected snake bites must be treated as potentially life-threatening, and medical aid should be sought urgently.

Signs and symptoms

Signs of a snake bite are not always visible. In some cases, the patient may not have felt anything. Symptoms may not appear for an hour or more after the person has been bitten.

Depending on the type of snake, signs and symptoms may include some or all of the following:

- immediate or delayed pain at the bite site
- swelling, bruising or local bleeding
- bite marks (usually on a limb) that may vary from obvious puncture wounds to scratches that may be almost invisible
- swollen and tender glands in the groin or armpit of the bitten limb
- faintness, dizziness
- nausea and vomiting
- headache
- abdominal pain
- oozing of blood from the bite site or gums
- double or blurred vision
- drooping eyelids
- difficulty in speaking or swallowing
- limb weakness or paralysis
- difficulty in breathing
- occasionally, initial collapse or confusion followed by partial or complete recovery.

What to do

Pressure bandage & immobilise

- 1 Follow DRSABCD.
- 2 Call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.
- 3 Lie the patient down and ask them to keep still. Reassure the patient.
- 4 If on a limb, apply an elasticised roller bandage (10–15 cm wide) over the bite site as soon as possible.
- 5 Apply a further elasticised roller bandage (10–15 cm wide), starting just above the fingers or toes and moving upwards on the bitten limb as far as can be reached.
 - Use clothing or other material if an elasticised roller bandage is not available.
 - Apply the bandage as firmly as possible to the limb. You should be unable to easily slide a finger between the bandage and the skin.
- 6 Immobilise the bandaged limb using splints.
- 7 Keep the patient lying down and completely still (immobilised).
- 8 Write down the time of the bite and when the bandage was applied. If possible, mark the location of the bite site (if known) on the skin with a pen, or photograph the site. Do not wash venom off the skin or clothes because it may assist identification.
- 9 Stay with the patient until medical aid arrives.

In a medical emergency call Triple Zero (000)

DRSABCD Danger ► Response ► Send for help ► Airway ► Breathing ► CPR ► Defibrillation

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SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Venom Research Unit, University of Melbourne www.avru.org

Australian Capital Territory Government Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate-

Environment *Urban Wildlife Snakes*

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Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2018). (Amended 2020).

Health Direct <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/snake-bites>

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

St John Ambulance Australia (2020 *First aid fact sheet Snake Bite*

Wildlife Victoria <https://www.wildlifelifevictoria.org.au/>

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	August 2022	NEXT REVIEW DATE	August 2023
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MODIFICATIONS	
August 2020	New policy drafted for FDC service Policy purchased from Child Care desk top