SNAKE AWARENESS POLICY

Education and Care services may be located in bush settings or visit bush settings as part of their educational program where it is known that 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 Service is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children and staff 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 staff 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 management	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 that is child safe.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 2A	Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children
S. 3A	Paramount consideration
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
100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
136	First aid qualifications

RELATED POLICIES

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

PURPOSE

We aim to ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children and staff 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 our service environment, the necessary strategies implemented to minimise the risk of snake bites and the appropriate medical response if required.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the 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.

IMPLEMENTATION

The safety, rights and best interests of children are our priority when identifying and managing potential risks from snakes within and around the Service and during excursions and outdoor activities. Educators and staff follow relevant risk assessments and procedures and take appropriate action if a snake is encountered. Educators and staff maintain appropriate supervision and take reasonable precautions to protect children from harm.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

Governance and Risk Management

- ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations are met
- ensure educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy
- ensure a risk assessment is conducted to identify the potential risk of encountering a snake on the Service premises and before undertaking any excursions.

Prevention and Environmental Controls

- ensure daily inspections of the outdoor and indoor learning environment are conducted prior to children arriving at the Service
- ensure lawns and gardens are well maintained, including cutting any long grass around the boundaries of the premises
- remove potential snake habitats such as piles of timber, compost heaps or sheets of galvanized iron from around the premises
- maintain clean surroundings around any animal housing/cages to reduce ~~any~~ potential mouse populations, which may attract snakes
- reptile-proof chicken or other animal enclosures
- ensure pet food and water bowls are not accessible to wildlife
- ensure all educators and staff wear enclosed footwear at all times, if required by the outcome of the Service's risk assessment, and/or in line with relevant policies.

Awareness and Education

- provide a snake identification chart for snakes found in the local area for educators and staff
- provide information to families about snake awareness and recommended responses if a snake is encountered
- ensure educators and staff are aware of the Service's procedures for responding to a snake sighting,

including how to keep children safe and when to seek assistance

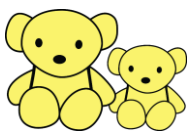
- provide emergency services with a description or photograph of the snake, if it can be obtained safely without approaching or handling the snake
- ensure children receive age-appropriate information about how to respond to a snake sighting or encounter at the Service or during transportation or an excursion.

Emergency Planning and Management

- develop an emergency plan and procedure that includes the response to a snake encounter and emergency first aid required in the event of a snake bite
- ensure educators and staff periodically practice the Service's emergency procedures for responding to a snake encounter or suspected snake bite as per their *Potential Emergencies – Risk Assessment*
- ensure that at least one educator or staff member with current ACECQA-approved first aid qualification is present and immediately available to respond in an emergency at all times while the Service is providing education and care to children
- ensure an emergency action plan is displayed in a prominent location for responding to a snake bite
- ensure first aid kits are readily accessible to adults and contain compression bandages, and that a fully stocked first aid kit is taken on excursions
- ensure that emergency medical assistance is sought immediately for any suspected snake bite, including calling 000 for an ambulance. Any anaphylaxis response is managed in accordance with the *Anaphylaxis Management Policy*.
- ensure an *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* is completed, following a snake bite
- make a notification of any serious incident arising from a snake bite or snake-related emergency to a regulatory authority (within 24 hours of the incident) through the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) and notify the child's parents/guardians within the prescribed timeframes.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- examine the Service grounds during their daily indoor and outdoor safety checks and report any potential snake hazards or sightings
- ensure no animal food or water is left out for wildlife, particularly overnight
- become familiar and confident with the Service's *Emergency and Evacuation Policy* and other related policies and procedures for responding to a snake encounter or a snake bite
- not approach, touch, catch, kill or handle snakes
- be aware of and familiar with snake species inhabiting the local area
- maintain a current ACECQA-approved first aid qualification ~~every 3 years~~ [best practice]



- ensure first aid kits are easily accessible and contain compression bandages
- notify the nominated supervisor/responsible person immediately if a snake is sighted
- wear appropriate clothing and enclosed shoes at all times, if required by the Service's risk assessment
- provide children with age-appropriate information about snakes and snake bite prevention
- remind children regularly that if they encounter a snake, they should move away quietly and report the sighting to an educator
- remind children not to put their hands into hollow logs, rock crevices or other areas where snakes may be hiding.

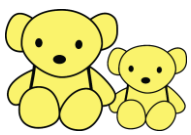
ENCOUNTERING A SNAKE

If a snake is sighted or encountered at the Service, educators and staff will:

- inform children to move away quietly and calmly
- move children and staff away from the immediate area, or move everyone out of the room/area/premises if the snake is indoors
- isolate the area and prevent access until the snake has moved away or been safely removed
- note the location of the snake
- if possible and safe to do so, monitor the snake from a safe distance without approaching or disturbing it
- contact an appropriate local wildlife rescue organisation or licensed snake handler if the snake remains and assistance is required
- if the snake is indoors, close doors where possible to limit its movement and wait for assistance (e.g., a licensed snake handler) to remove the snake
- not approach, touch, catch, kill, contain or handle the snake.

EMERGENCY SNAKE BITE ACTION PLAN

- Conduct a primary survey of the area and move the person away from the snake. Do not attempt to catch, kill or handle 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
- Apply a pressure immobilisation bandage as soon as possible
- 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
- Keep the person still and immobilised and minimise movement
- Remain with the person and reassure them until the ambulance arrives



- **Do not** remove clothing or wash the bite area - venom left on the skin and clothing can help identify the snake
- **Do not** cut or suck the bite to drain venom
- **Do not** apply a tourniquet (a strap to stop blood flow)
- Be prepared to commence cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if the person becomes unresponsive or is not breathing normally.

FAMILIES WILL:

- familiarise themselves with the *Snake Awareness Policy*
- ensure their child wears enclosed shoes to the Service
- reinforce snake awareness behaviours with their child, especially during periods when snakes are more likely to be active
- provide feedback to the Service regarding this policy for review and improvement.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Snake Awareness Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or any incident related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management. All families will be notified 14 days before any policy change that may have a significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the Service or the family's ability to utilise the Service, or earlier in line with the *Governance Policy*.

RELATED RESOURCES

Administration of First Aid Procedure Animals and Pets - Risk Assessment	Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record Potential Emergencies - Risk Assessment

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*
Australian Venom Research Unit, University of Melbourne. About Venom
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Health Direct. (2024). Snake bites
St John Ambulance Australia. (2022). First aid fact sheet: Snake bite

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Allana Young	Service Manager, Board of Management, Staff and Families	4/11/26
POLICY REVIEWED	OCTOBER 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	OCTOBER 2027
VERSION	V8.10.26		
MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy review • reorganised sections to improve flow and clarity • updated wording to cover snakes in and around the Service, not just bush settings • added the paramountcy principle to the implementation section • clarified emergency response responsibilities and removed the requirement to identify snakes for antivenom • removed detailed first aid information from the appendices, as this is covered through first aid training and references • updated sources and references as required		
PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS			
OCTOBER 2025	• policy maintenance - no major changes to policy • sources checked for currency and updated as required		

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.

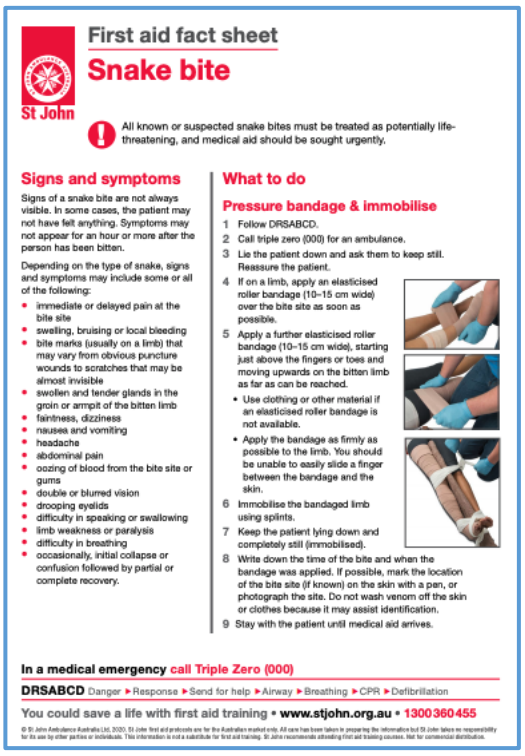
Follow these steps to apply a pressure immobilisation bandage:

- 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

St John

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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