



<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Snake Awareness Policy</b>
<b>Related Policies and Legislation</b>	<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2020</i> AISWA Guidelines – Work Health and Safety
<b>Policy Category</b>	Student Health & Wellbeing Staff Health & Wellbeing Visitor and Volunteer & Wellbeing
<b>Relevant Audience</b>	All Treetops Community
<b>Date of Issue / Last Revision</b>	27 October 2022
<b>Date Set for Review</b>	October 2025
<b>Person/s Responsible for Review</b>	Treetops Administration

## Snake Awareness Policy

### Purpose

Treetops is located in a partially bush setting 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.

### Policy

Treetops aims to ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to protect students 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 school environment, the necessary strategies implemented to minimise the risk of snake bites.

### Scope

This policy applies to students, families, staff, and visitors of Treetops Montessori School

## **Snakes**

Dangerously venomous dugites and tiger snakes are common in the Perth metropolitan area. Both species hunt small mammals, frogs, and lizards, and are active during the day and at night in warm weather.

- Dugites (*Pseudonaja Affinis*) are most common in the drier bushland areas around Perth, especially grasslands. These fast-moving snakes are attracted to aviaries and other locations where mice can be found.
- Tiger snakes (*Notechis Scutatus*) are most common in vegetation around wetland areas, but may be found well away from water. They are seen throughout the year sunning themselves in open areas.

### **Precautions:**

- Periodically remind students and staff about the risk of snakes, at least biannually and at the onset of spring/summer.
- Take care in bushland and grassy areas, including bush walks off the school site.
- Walk and/or cycle in cleared areas only, where you can see the ground.
- When bushwalking, wear long trousers and boots or other enclosed footwear that preferably cover the ankles.
- Keep a watchful eye on the ground about a metre ahead of where you are walking, and avoid entering areas of long grass, rushes and undergrowth.
- Remove long grass and items lying on the ground such as corrugated iron, which may provide cover for snakes.
- Reduce mice numbers around the school.

### **If a snake is sighted at school:**

- Do not approach or aggravate it in any way. Most bites occur when people accidentally step on snakes, or while attempting to kill them.
- Act immediately to remove students from proximity to the snake.
- Take steps to make the area around the snake safe by highlighting the hazard with signage or cones etc.
- Advise the school office, if you have not done so already.
- The school office will ensure compliance with the above and contact a professional to remove the snake if this is possible.
- The school community (onsite) is to be advised of each snake sighting and location.

<https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/%E2%80%A6/living-w%E2%80%A6/87-dealing-with-snakes>

### **Snake bite action plan (St Johns WA)**

<https://stjohnwa.com.au/online-resources/first-aid-information-and-resources/snake-bite#:~:text=Lay%20the%20casualty%20down%2C%20rest,far%20as%20can%20be%20reached.>

\*See chart on next page

# How to treat a snake bite

Snake bites are not common in Australia, but all should be treated as life threatening. Snakes force venom out under pressure through fangs in the upper jaw. The spread of snake venom depends on its absorption through the lymphatic system.

## What to do

1. Follow [DRSABCD St John Action Plan](#).
2. Urgent medical aid. Call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance.
3. Ensure the casualty does not move.
4. Lay the casualty down, rest and reassure.
5. If the bite is on a limb, apply a broad pressure bandage over the bite site as soon as possible.
6. Then apply a further elasticised or firm bandage - start at fingers or toes and move up the limb as far as can be reached. Apply tightly but without stopping blood flow.
7. Splint the limb including the joints on either side of the bite.
8. Write down the time that the casualty was bitten and when the bandage was applied.
9. If the casualty becomes unconscious and not breathing normally, Commence CPR and Defibrillation.

## Do not

- ▶ Wash the venom off the skin (it may aid in identification).
- ▶ Cut the bitten area and try to suck the venom out of the wound.
- ▶ Use a tourniquet.
- ▶ Try and catch the snake.

## Signs and symptoms

- ▶ Visible in an hour or more after the person has been bitten.
- ▶ In children, signs and symptoms may appear within minutes.
- ▶ Paired fang marks, but often only a single mark or a scratch mark may be present. Marks or scratches may bleed.
- ▶ Nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.
- ▶ Headache, drowsiness, giddiness or faintness.
- ▶ Double or blurred vision, drooping eyelids.
- ▶ Voice changes, trouble speaking or swallowing. Pain or tightness in the throat, chest or abdomen.
- ▶ Breathing difficulties, respiratory weakness or arrest.

## Caused by

- ▶ Fangs puncturing the skin.