

VLC Environmental Hazards Policy

Contents:

[DAM SAFETY](#)

[SNAKE SAFETY](#)

[SPIDER SAFETY](#)

[MOSQUITO SAFETY](#)

[FIRE SAFETY](#)

DAM SAFETY

- **Please be aware that we have 4x unfenced dams and an open wetland area at the Commonplace Vasse farm venue, where we host Village Learning Collective programs.**
- Children are to be supervised AT ALL TIMES whilst visiting Commonplace Vasse and participating in Village Learning activities.
- The dams and wetlands pose the risk of drowning.
- Please do not attempt to access the dams or swim in the waterways on the property. They are not suitable for swimming or drinking.
- All waterways are considered deep water, and there are steep and slippery sides to the dams. Please do not let children play near the edges of any of the waterways.
- **The Joeys Garden (where we host the Kindy Program) is fenced, however all other spaces that the Village Learning Collective are NOT FENCED.**
- **Parents must explain to their children the need to respect their Educators and Supervising Adults and listen carefully to their safety instructions. Parents must take the time to familiarise themselves with the water safety risks of the property and educate and advise their children accordingly for safe participation in VLC Programs.**

SNAKE SAFETY

All snake bites must be treated as potentially life-threatening. If you have been bitten by a snake, call triple zero (000) and ask for an ambulance.

On this property, we have both Tiger Snakes and Dugites. They are most active (and dangerous) in early Spring, however they are around all Summer (approx. Oct - Mar), and may be seen at other times in the year as they do not hibernate over winter.

Tips to stay “Snake Safe” --

- Snakes like to hide in dark, hidden areas and long grasses. Avoid reaching or stepping into such places without first checking or removing potential hazards.
- Keep a safe distance from any snakes you encounter, and do not attempt to handle or approach them.
- Be aware of your surroundings and watch for snakes in rocky crevices, logs, bushes, long grasses and under debris
- When attending the VLC, consider wearing “snake safe clothing”. Please consider wearing closed shoes such as boots that are hard for snakes to bite through, with thick socks. Long pants and long shirts.
- Please familiarise yourself with Snake First Aid training.
- Please know your Emergency Plan in case of a Snake Bite and how you will get to the hospital.
- IF YOU SEE A SNAKE PLEASE REPORT IT ASAP — Please tell your Educator / Coordinator / Event Host who will report it to Raf 0407765396 (or contact him directly yourself). You are also welcome to send an email to maintenance@commonplacevasse.com however, if it's a matter of safety, then calling would be better.
- We will try our best to relocate all snakes that are seen near VLC areas.
- Please avoid making stacks of wood / piles of leaves and leaving them for more than 24 hours during the Spring / Summer months particularly. Please remove all debris piles to their appropriate locations immediately.
 - Please ensure all lids are securely closed on boxes in the play spaces and gardening spaces.

LEARN MORE ABOUT SNAKE SAFETY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA:

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

How do I provide first aid for snake bites?

You should always provide emergency care if you or someone else is bitten by a snake — including [cardiopulmonary resuscitation](#) (CPR), if required. Snake bites should be medically assessed and treated even if the person who was bitten seems well.

Keep calm, and follow these steps:

- Get the person away from the snake.

- Ensure they rest and help them to stay calm.
- Follow the steps of basic [first aid](#) — [DRSABCD](#).
- Call triple zero (000) and ask for an ambulance.
- If calling triple zero does not work on your mobile phone, try calling 112.
 - THE //what.three.words for Vasse Hideaway is: ///boring.kangaroo.mythic
- Apply a pressure immobilisation bandage if you can't use a pressure immobilisation bandage because the bite is on the stomach or back, apply constant, firm pressure.

Things you SHOULD NOT do:

- Do not wash the bite area — venom left on the skin and clothing can help identify the snake.
- Do not apply a tourniquet (a strap to stop blood flow)
- Do not cut the wound
- Do not try to suck the venom (poison) out.

St John Ambulance Australia has a [quick guide](#) to the first aid management of snake bites.

SPIDER SAFETY

Australia is known for its deadly spiders. However, aside from a Redback or two, we don't really have much to be concerned about at the VLC. Being in the bush means living with spiders. Spider activity is highest in **Oct - Mar**, and we have some really cool species that live here - including Christmas Spiders! Our Guinea Fowls and Chickens love eating spiders, etc, and do a good job of keeping things in order. Please use common sense and do not stick your hands into dark, webby holes in the garden.

If you've been bitten by a big black spider, treat it as a medical emergency. Call triple zero (000) and ask for an ambulance.

Different types of spider bite:

Spider bites can be split into 3 groups:

1. Funnel-web spiders and other big black spiders — bites from these spiders are very dangerous and can cause death.
2. Redback spiders — bites from redbacks can cause a lot of pain, but they aren't life-threatening.
3. All other spiders in Australia are generally harmless.

Symptoms:

Symptoms will depend on what type of spider has bitten you.

Funnel-web spider and other big black spider bite symptoms:

bad pain at the bite site

lots of sweating

[nausea](#) (feeling sick), [vomiting](#) (being sick) and [abdominal \(tummy\) pain](#)

Other symptoms that you may have include:

drooling

muscle twitching

difficulty breathing

[confusion](#), leading to unconsciousness

numbness around your mouth and tongue

Mouse spider bites are not common, but their symptoms are like those caused by a bite from a funnel-web spider.

Redback spider bite symptoms:

pain where the spider bit you

sweating

headache

muscle weakness or spasms

White tail spiders:

White tail spiders aren't considered dangerous to humans. A white tail spider bite can cause:

an initial burning pain
swelling
blisters

TREATMENT:

Funnel-web spider and other big black spider bite - CALL 000

If you have been bitten by a redback spider:

1. Wash the bite area with soap and water.
2. Use a cold pack for 15 minutes to help ease the pain.
3. See your doctor if you have bad symptoms.

If your pain is very bad, go to your local hospital emergency department.

For all other spider bites:

wash the bite with soap and water
apply antiseptic cream if you have it
apply an ice-pack to reduce swelling and manage pain
you can also use [paracetamol](#) or [ibuprofen](#) to manage your pain

Don't put the ice pack directly on your skin as it might cause a cold burn. Always wrap it in a clean cloth like a tea towel.

If your symptoms get worse, see a doctor

Complications of spider bites

If someone is experiencing anaphylaxis, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.

Some people have a severe allergic reaction ([anaphylaxis](#)) to being bitten by a spider. This is very serious and can cause death.

Symptoms of anaphylaxis are:

difficult or noisy breathing
a swollen tongue
swelling or tightness in the throat
persistent cough
difficulty talking or a hoarse voice
dizziness
collapse
being pale and floppy (young children)

If the person collapses or stops breathing they may need [cardiopulmonary resuscitation](#) (CPR).

MOSQUITO SAFETY

Luckily we have a really healthy natural ecosystem at the Village Learning Collective venue Commonplace Vasse farm. However it's important to note, that the Dunsborough - Bunbury region is known for higher than average levels of mosquito activity during **Aug - Oct**, including the presence of Ross River Virus. We have found at this venue that we generally have a big burst of mosquito activity when the first heat arrives after winter for a few weeks, then the birds and turtles and nature balances it all out really quickly. We also have had no known cases of mosquito-born illnesses. We are very lucky here, considering how much water we have in winter with 4 dams and a wetland.

That said - prevention is always best.

Please come prepared to VLC outdoor sessions.

Ways to “fight the bite”:

- Keep flyscreens closed at all times, day and night, as to not let mozzies inside.
- Mosquitoes are attracted to light - switch unnecessary lights off.
- Avoid being outside during busy mosquito times - such as dawn and dusk.
- Wear protective clothing (loose long sleeves and pants).
- Use mosquito repellent.
- Please bring mosquito repellent in your child's backpack.

Mosquitoes may come out around dawn and dusk at all times throughout the year. However, outside of the first Spring hatchings, we find we very rarely have to use any kind of mosquito deterrents.

FIRE SAFETY

Our primary concern with fire management is the safety of people and property.

WINTER MONTHS:

In winter, you are welcome to light a fire in the Indoor Fireplace in The School Room. If there are no Local Fire Restrictions in place, and the Fire Rating is **Moderate** (see emergency.wa.gov.au website), you are also welcome to use outdoor firepits provided (or your own self-contained pits, raised off the ground).

As a general rule: If you light the fire, you are responsible for it.

As a safety guideline, never leave your Indoor Fire burning without first checking that the door is securely locked and there are no potential fire hazards left in front of or around the fireplace. If you require assistance in learning how to light a fire or manage a fire safely please contact one of the VLC Coordinators or Commonplace Managers.

Proper extinguishment of an outdoor fire includes the pouring of water over coals and putting a protective covering over the coals, to prevent people unknowingly walking on them. In some cases it may be appropriate to erect a sign to state when the fire was extinguished and how big the fire was (including an estimation of how long the coals will burn for).

SUMMER MONTHS:

In the Summer Months there is a Total Fire Ban for the local region due to bushfire risk. This means that ALL FIRES OF ANY KIND ARE PROHIBITED.

We highly recommend downloading the app Bushfire.io for keeping track of bushfires in the South West and familiarising yourself with the www.emergency.wa.gov.au website to stay up to date with the latest bushfire information.

In the case of extreme Bushfire risk, we will advise that all VLC participants should be picked up by caregivers and evacuated immediately. We will provide you with information on the closest emergency disaster relief shelter. There are 4 evacuation exits on the property, with well-maintained firebreaks, as well as fire-fighting equipment. We have a muster point at the front of the property, where you can collect your child from. Educators and Parent Helpers will bring children to the muster point immediately and start contacting parents with the phone number provided on their Check-In sheets.

If you believe you or your child is at risk from bushfire, and have not heard from us, please do not hesitate to collect your child and evacuate immediately. DO NOT WAIT, in the case of a bushfire.