

# Bush Fire Policy

Bushfires are an intrinsic part of Australia’s environment. The basic factors which determine whether a bushfire will occur include the presence of fuel, oxygen, and an ignition source. The intensity and speed the bushfire will spread will depend on the current temperature, fuel load (fallen bark, leaf litter, small branches etc.), fuel moisture (Dry fuel will burn quickly, damp or wet fuel may not burn at all), wind speed and slope angle.

This policy outlines the strategies and procedures the Service will adhere to in the event of a bush fire, including information about Service closure during an emergency evacuation.

## National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety		
2.2	<b>Safety</b>	Each child is protected
2.2.2	<b>Incident and emergency</b>	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership		
7.1.2	<b>Management Systems</b>	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service

## Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW	
12	Meaning of serious incident
51	Conditions on service approval (safety, health and wellbeing of children
89	First Aid Kits
93	Administration of medication
97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
98	Telephone or other communication equipment
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

## RELATED POLICIES

Emergency Evacuation Policy	Administration of First Aid Policy Work
Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Policy	Work Health and Safety Policy
Family Communication	Health and Safety Policy
Supervision 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 response to bushfires. The potential for extreme fire conditions varies greatly throughout Australia, both in frequency and severity. When experienced close to populated areas, significant loss is possible

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Australian climate is frequently hot, dry and susceptible to drought. The widely varied fire seasons are reflected in the continent's different weather patterns. For most of southern Australia, the danger period is summer and autumn. For New South Wales and southern Queensland, the peak risk usually occurs in spring and early summer. The Northern Territory experiences most of its fires in winter and spring.

It is vital for the Service to be informed and prepared for bush fire conditions and respond appropriately during periods of high fire danger or local bush fire activity.

### **Technology**

A 'bush fire prone area' is an area of land that can support a bushfire or is likely to be subject to bushfire attack. Bush fire prone maps are prepared by local councils and certified by the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS)

### **Management/ Nominated Supervisors will:**

- Contact the local council to determine if they are in a bush fire prone area
- **Consult with local schools about emergency planning**
- Create and update the Service's emergency and evacuation policies and procedures
- Conduct a risk assessment to identify a potential bush fire risk to the Service
- Ensure a current emergency and evacuation floor plan of the Service is displayed
- Emergency drills, including a bush fire are practiced with Educators and children
- Ensure a record is kept of each emergency evacuation drill practiced
- Ensure the Service and Educators are prepared for bush fire conditions, responding appropriately during high fire danger periods
- Ensure the Fire Danger Rating (FDR) is checked daily
- Communicate with staff, Educators, and families about bush fire preparation information and provisions
- Discuss bush fire response procedures at team meetings

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- Ensure local emergency services have current contact details, including mobile number for emergency contact after hours
- Ensure gutters are cleaned out and free from dry leaves and other debris
- Ensure flammable items are removed from the Service
- Ensure a clear and effective communication procedure during an emergency is implemented
- Organise and communicate with off-site evacuation sites about emergency arrangements
- Trim trees to 2m from the Service building
- Conduct an 'emergency first aid kit / backpack audit' to ensure emergency contact information and supplies are current
- Ensure current emergency phone numbers are near the phone, including emergency services and the Department of Education and Communities
- Monitor the bush fire situation when the rating is above High through internet or radio
- Create and implement an Emergency Plan identifying actions including:
  1. Name and address of the Service
  2. Contact details
  3. Number of employees and sign in/out registers
  4. Number of occupants with support needs
  5. Details of location or address if required to evacuate
  6. Assembly points and transportation arrangements if required to evacuate
  7. Prevention measures the Service will take prior and during the bush fire period
  8. Procedures to be taken when there is a bush fire in the local district
  9. Response measures the Service will take if confronted with a bush fire hazard or emergency
  10. Recovery measures to support the return to the Service and routines
  11. Family contact details

### Educators will:

- Examine the Service grounds during their indoor and outdoor safety checks
- Ensure they are familiar with the daily Fire Danger Rating (FDR)
- Ensure the emergency first aid kit / backpack is organised and stored in an area that is easily accessible
- Become familiar and confident with the Service emergency evacuation policies and procedures
- Become familiar with the Service's emergency exits
- Eliminate all papers around the Service, including art work, posters, displays etc.

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- Keep up to date with professional development and training about bush fires and emergency evacuation
- Be familiar with their role and responsibilities in the event of a bush fire

STATE SPECIFICATIONS

VICTORIA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early Childhood Service at the highest risk of fire danger are placed on the Department’s Bushfire At-Risk Register</li><li>• Inclusion on this register is a trigger for Early Childhood Services to pre-emptively close on days declared Code Red in their Bureau of Meteorology district</li><li>• For information regarding emergency closures and relocations <a href="https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/pages/closures.aspx">https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/pages/closures.aspx</a></li></ul>

Source

Education and Care Services National Regulation Revised National Quality Standard ECE Bush-fire Information <a href="file:///C:/Users/a-ecr/Desktop/ECE-Bushfires-information-sheet.pdf">file:///C:/Users/a-ecr/Desktop/ECE-Bushfires-information-sheet.pdf</a> The Australian Government – Geoscience Australia <a href="http://www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/hazards/bushfire">http://www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/hazards/bushfire</a> NSW Rural Fire Service – Development Planning <a href="https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/29271/DPP1079-Emergency-management-and-evacuation-plan-FORM.pdf">https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/29271/DPP1079-Emergency-management-and-evacuation-plan-FORM.pdf</a> Community Early Learning Australia <a href="https://www.cela.org.au/2018/01/07/bushfire-advice-for-childrens-services/">https://www.cela.org.au/2018/01/07/bushfire-advice-for-childrens-services/</a>
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Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
October 2018	New Policy Created	October 2019