



Springwood and District Preschool Kindergarten

Bush Fire Policy

Legislation:

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulation 2018

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

2.2.1	Supervision	<i>At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.</i>
2.2	Safety	<i>Each child is protected.</i>
2.2.2	Incident and emergency	<i>Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.</i>

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

7.1.2	Management Systems	<i>Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.</i>
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EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

12	<i>Meaning of serious incident</i>
51	<i>Conditions on service approval (safety, health and wellbeing of children)</i>
89	<i>First Aid Kits</i>
93	<i>Administration of medication</i>
97	<i>Emergency and evacuation procedures</i>
98	<i>Telephone or other communication equipment</i>
168(2)(e)	<i>Policies and procedures are required in relation to: Emergency and evacuation</i>

168	<i>Education and care services must have policies and procedures</i>
170	<i>Policies and procedures are to be followed</i>

Approved providers, nominated supervisors, co-ordinators and educators have responsibility for supporting the health, protection, safety and wellbeing of all children. In exercising their responsibilities, they must take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of harm, injury and infection. When preparing emergency and evacuation procedures, services will conduct a risk assessment to identify potential emergencies that are relevant to the service.

- Identify the types of emergencies that may occur and respond to each emergency i.e. evacuate or remain inside*
- assess the potential risk to the safety and wellbeing of children and adults*
- outline steps to eliminate, minimise or control the emergency and subsequent risks.*
- children's health, comfort and wellbeing strongly impact on their learning, confidence and self-growth*
- all children have a right to safety and protection from harm*
- adequate supervision and effective management of incidents and emergencies are paramount at all times to support children's safety and engagement in the educational program*

Rationale:

Bushfires are an inherent part of Australia's environment. Bushfires can significantly impact on lives, property and the environment. The basic factors that determine whether a bushfire will occur include the presence of fuel, oxygen, and an ignition source. The intensity and speed the bushfire will spread depends on the current temperature, fuel load (fallen bark, leaf litter, small branches), fuel moisture (dry fuel will burn quickly, damp or wet fuel may not burn at all), wind speed, and slope angle.

Emergency management arrangements for fire safety differ within each state and territory and are determined by the State Emergency Services or combined emergency service agencies. This policy reflects information related to Education and Care Services located in NSW.

The National Law requires early childhood education services to ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from any harm or hazard likely to cause injury, including bush fires. Regulations 97 and 168 (2) of the Education and Care Services National Regulations require that every early childhood education and care service in Australia has an emergency and evacuation policy and procedure which includes:

- a risk assessment to identify the potential emergencies that are relevant to the service
- instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency and evacuation procedures
- an emergency and evacuation floor plan and
- the rehearsal of emergency and evacuation procedures every 3 months.

Aim:

Springwood and District Pre-School is committed, as far as practicable, to providing a safe environment for all children, staff and any other persons participating in the program.

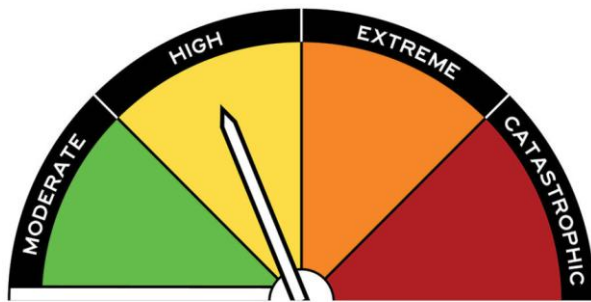
We are committed to:

- ☐ As far as practicable, providing a safe environment for all children, staff, and any other persons participating in the program in the event of a bushfire.
- ☐ Being prepared for ongoing bushfire seasons by ensuring emergency procedures are in place to effectively manage the threat of fire danger at the centre on an ongoing basis.
- ☐ Making families aware on days forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology as either "Extreme" or "Catastrophic" on the Fire Danger Rating index. We put A3 notices on entrances to preschool.
- ☐ All staff being adequately trained and aware of emergency procedures.
- ☐ Responding to the needs of the children, in the event that a child is injured, becomes ill, or is traumatised whilst attending the centre.
- ☐ Complying with regulatory and legislative requirements.
- ☐ Being familiar with the procedures and responsibilities outlined in the emergency management plan.
- ☐ The day-to-day implementation of this policy.
- ☐ Ensuring the safety of the children in their care.
- ☐ Ensuring the safety of any children needing special assistance.
- ☐ Ensuring procedures are in place for efficient emergency communication with parents/guardians.
- ☐ Scheduling and participating in fire drills as scheduled in the emergency management plan, and recording the details and dates of practices.
- ☐ Signing all children in and out for everyday including if a parent chooses to collect a child outside of normal collection times.
- ☐ Staff to ensure at all times whenever they enter or exit the building that they sign in and out located in the office.

Know the fire danger ratings

From 1 September 2022, Australia has a simplified, action-oriented fire danger rating system. Australian Fire Danger Rating (AFDRS): provides an indication of the possible consequences of a fire. This rating is standardised across all Australian states and territories. The higher the fire danger rating, the more dangerous the conditions. The AFDRS uses four tiers of fire danger from *Moderate* to *Catastrophic*. The AFDRS are maintained and updated by emergency services in each state or territory.

The Australian Fire Danger Ratings (AFDRS) levels are:



MODERATE

Plan and prepare

HIGH

Be ready to act

EXTREME

Take action now to protect life and property

CATASTROPHIC

For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas

MODERATE

Plan and prepare.

Most fires can be controlled.

- › Stay up to date and be ready to act if there is a fire.

HIGH

Be ready to act.

Fires can be dangerous.

- › There's a heightened risk. Be alert for fires in your area.
- › Decide what you will do if a fire starts.
- › If a fire starts, your life and property may be at risk. The safest option is to avoid bush fire risk areas.

EXTREME

Take action now to protect your life and property.

Fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous.

- › These are dangerous fire conditions.
- › Check your bush fire plan and that your property is fire ready.
- › If a fire starts, take immediate action. If you and your property are not prepared to the highest level, go to a safer location well before the fire impacts.
- › Reconsider travel through bush fire risk areas.

CATASTROPHIC

For your survival, leave bush fire risk areas.

If a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost.

- › These are the most dangerous conditions for a fire.
- › Your life may depend on the decisions you make, even before there is a fire.
- › Stay safe by going to a safer location early in the morning or the night before.
- › Homes cannot withstand fires in these conditions. You may not be able to leave and help may not be available.

NO RATING: On days when there's minimal risk, the white bar meaning 'No Rating' will be used. Report any fires to 000.



More information

Fire danger information may be broadcast on television, radio and printed in newspapers. Or you may see the current fire danger rating level on roadside signs, on social media, in apps or websites. These are good prompts for you to seek more information from your state or territory's fire and emergency services portal.

Emergency Preparation Procedures

A. Preparation for the fire season:

1. Inside the classrooms:

- ☐ Establish plans for offsite backup of all electronic information.
- ☐ Ensure all records are updated and recorded in suitable format.
- ☐ Ensure mobile phone is updated and charged at all times.
- ☐ Emergency evacuation bags will be checked each month by each room by staff to ensure first aid kits contents are up to date and products are within their use by date. Any products out of date will be replaced.
- ☐ Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted once every month and a record kept including response time and continuing improvement necessary for the future.
 - An evaluation of the practice drills of all emergency procedures is to be recorded.
 - As per Regulations, the practicing of fire drills and in the event of leaving the premises, the preschool must adhere to the child/staff ratios of that of an excursion. All other fire drill practices will involve the evacuation of the children where their names will be marked off the roll.
- ☐ Educators will be regularly provided with fire training, including use of fire extinguishers.

2. Outdoor Environment :

- ☐ Check and clean gutters of all debris
- ☐ Remove all fallen branches
- ☐ Remove all fuel around the preschool building and perimeters
- ☐ Check sprinklers are not blocked and work as required
- ☐ Ensure hoses are in working condition

3. Communication:

- ☐ <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/news-at-det/bushfire-safety> this web site in DEC- identifies individual operational status for preschools, primary schools etc.
- ☐ <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/> during extreme weather conditions check the index from the RFS site so appropriate information can be communicated to families. At all levels of alert, the

Director or the most senior staff member is responsible for decision making regarding the safety and movement of children, staff and visitors,

- ☐ <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/prepare-your-family>
- ☐ Refer to **'Hazards Near ME'** App on Preschool iPad especially in bush fire season.
- ☐ Report fire updates to families – through
 - signs on gate at arrival times
 - regular email families of conditions (as per the 2016 fires evidence)
 - Facebook
- ☐ Make links with Springwood Public School to access in case of evacuation of preschool. Preschool will also identify other offsite evacuation sites not in the immediate vicinity of the preschool if the public school is in lockdown due to location of fire.
- ☐ Phone contact with local public school is maintained during period – to share and collaborate knowledge and information.
- ☐ Send families **"fire survival plan"**.
- ☐ Preschool will retain access to parent/carer contact information in **emergency pack** (updated each term) when they evacuate and ensure parents/carers know what the evacuation procedures are in advance of any emergency.
- ☐ Communicate the relevant content of the Pre-School's emergency management plan to staff, parents, visitors, emergency services and other relevant parties.
- ☐ Mobile phones will have access to the app "Hazards near me".
- ☐ Telephone numbers of emergency services are prominently displayed at each telephone, including Fire Brigade, Ambulance, Police, Poisons Information Centre.
- ☐ Communicate each year with Springwood primary school to reinforcement the commitment that in the event of a bush fire in the railway side the preschool, that emergency evacuation will take place to Springwood Primary school hall.
- ☐ A red warning sign 'Extreme Fire Risk Today' will be displayed on the front entrance gate.
- ☐ *Staff will inform parents regarding **'Catastrophic Fire Risk Day'** and let parents know preschool will be closed.*
- ☐ Testing of emergency procedures in the absence of usual Teacher(s) to make sure that the emergency procedures can be executed by back-up staff.
- ☐ Testing of emergency procedures without prior notification to staff, parents and children to make sure the procedures can be executed unexpectedly.
- ☐ Establish a formal process for informing relief staff and parents on duty of their roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency.
- ☐ Provide families access to the RFS survival plans.

B. Procedures to be followed during the fire season:

1. On a **daily** basis during the fire season (November/December & February/March) teachers will:

- ☐ Turn on internet site NSW RFS

- ☐ Staff re-read bush fire policy, each season
- ☐ Backed up critical data to a portable storage device and stored it in a secure location.
- ☐ Stored flammable materials such as wood, gas, petrol and paint well clear of buildings
- ☐ Compiled a list of [current emergency phone numbers](#), including numbers for your local police, fire, ambulance, State Emergency Service, local council, gas and electricity companies, and staff contacts
- ☐ Packed laptop and mobile phone(s) with spare batteries and car chargers
- ☐ Provide families with our bushfire policy annually.
- ☐ Consulted with local authorities (e.g. fire brigade) to obtain relevant and critical information to include in your plan- Annual specific staff training for emergency situations.
- ☐ Document and reflect on drill procedures
- ☐ Ensure parents are aware of our processes- email out our emergency management plan.
- ☐ When fires are in the local area, communicate to families through email and facebook and webpage. (promote families to keep an eye on these electronic methods).
- ☐ Ensure emergency mobile phone is on and charged
- ☐ Draw the blinds (as required)
- ☐ Make a sign for the front gate informing parents when the weather warning is “Extreme”

Evacuation or lockdown

At all levels of alert, the Director or the most senior staff member is responsible for decision making regarding the safety and movement of children, staff and visitors, unless police and emergency services intervene directly or through an authorised officer whose authority to act has been established beyond reasonable doubt.

If fire prevents anyone leaving the site all persons will remain on site and staff will stay with children remaining on site. No person is to leave the safe refuge until the situation outside is assessed to be safe or as advised by emergency services, for example, police or RFS. In this event the safe refuge site will be determined by authorities depending on the direction and location of the fire.

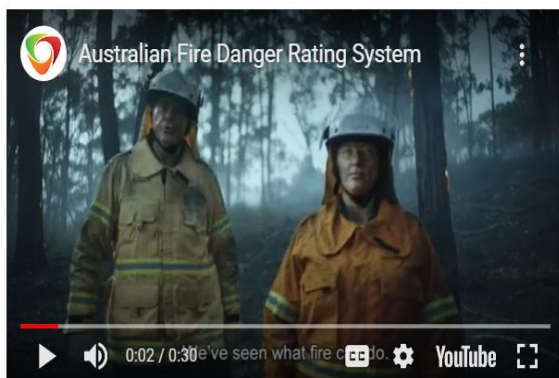
Staff will make provision to care for children for an extended period of time in the event that the area is locked down and collection authorities are unable to access the safe refuge area. Children can be collected from the safe refuge point once it is safe to do so and staff must be informed when a parent/guardian has arrived to collect their child/children, in order to be marked off the roll. If a fire is burning near homes of staff members area, staff will be permitted to leave on the condition that correct staff/child ratios can be maintained at the preschool and that it is safe for them to do so. This matter will be arranged between the Director and or Educational Leader and staff member. If the staff member can leave and return to their home they do so at their own risk.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES PRACTICE

It is important that the children understand how and why they need to cooperate, Without causing any undue stress or panic bell only to be used by adults in emergency situations (not necessary to say, "fire") When children hear whistle, they immediately stop what they are doing and come to staff. Evacuate the building according to the procedure. Treat any injuries and comfort any children in distress.

<https://youtu.be/9hzGgQ6gCdE> - YouTube

Know the Changes. They could save your life



Australia's fire danger rating system has been improved and simplified to make it easier for you to make decisions to stay safe on days of fire danger risk.

Across the country, fire and emergency services are applying nationally consistent colours, signs and terminology. This means that wherever you go in Australia, and whatever the season or bushfire fuels you're surrounded by, you can understand the level of threat and what you need to do to stay safe.

Resources and References

RFS EMERGENCY WEBSITE

<http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/>

DEC Bush fire active site

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/news-at-det/bushfire-safety>

NSW FB & Rescue

<http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/>

Bureau of Meteorology:

<http://www.bom.gov.au/>

Notify NSW Fire and Rescue on **000** stating_

Springwood and District Preschool Kindergarten
9-12 Macquarie Rd.

BUSH FIRE INFORMATION LINE

1800 NSW RFS

1 8 0 0 6 7 9 7 3 7

www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

Relevant documentation

Floor Plan (To be displayed on the wall with the Emergency Procedures)
 Attachment A: Emergency Evacuation Evaluation Form
 Attachment C: Emergency Lock Down Evaluation Form
 Risk Assessment Tool

NEW SOUTH WALES

- NSW Rural Fire Service- check for bush fire prone area <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/building-in-a-bush-fire-area/planning-for-bush-fire-protection/bush-fire-prone-land/check-bfpl>
- On days when a Catastrophic AFDRS is issued, services identified as Category 1 within affected NSW Fire Area may be required to temporarily cease operation and enact their Emergency Management Plan
- NSW Department of Education Early childhood education: [Developing an Emergency Management Plan](#)
- [Early Childhood Education and Care Information Sheet](#)
- *Fires Near Me* Smartphone App

RESOURCES

ACECQA- [Managing Emergency Situations in Early Education and Care Services](#)

[Australian Government Department of Education](#) – Emergency and natural disaster assistance

[Be You](#)- resources- Bushfires and mental health

Bushfire Emergency Planning Guideline (Tasmania) [A guide to planning for bushfire emergency](#)

[Emerging Minds](#)- Bushfire preparedness for your family

NSW Department of Education [Developing your Service's Emergency Management Plan and Procedures](#)
 (updated April 2022)

NSW Department of Education [Service site bushfire grassfire readiness checklist](#)

[NSW Rural Fire Service](#) for up-to-date information

[NSW Government Hazards Near Me app](#)

NSW Rural Fire Service [Development Planning A guide to developing a Bush Fire Emergency Management Evacuation Plan](#)

SOURCES

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

Australian Government: Geoscience Australia. Community safety: Bushfire:
<http://www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/hazards/bushfire>

Community Early Learning Australia. [Bushfire advice for children's services](#)

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011). (Amended 2023)

[Guide to the National Quality Framework](#). (2017). (Amended 2023).

National Council for Fire and Emergency Services (afac). 2022. <https://www.afac.com.au>

NSW Department of Education. Education and care service site bushfire/grassfire readiness review checklist.

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education-service/current-service-providers/emergency/plan>

NSW Government Education. Information sheet for the 2017/2018 bush fire season: Early childhood education and care:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education-service/media/documents/ECE-Bushfires-information-sheet.pdf>

NSW Rural Fire Service. BAL rating and bush fire prone area map: <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/building-in-a-bush-fire-area/planning-for-bush-fire-protection/bush-fire-prone-land/check-bfpl>

NSW Rural Fire Service. Fire Danger Rating: <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fdr-and-tobans>

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Policy Reviewed by: _____ *Approved by:* _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Date: ____/____/____

Next Review Date: ____/____/____