

BUSHFIRE POLICY

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.

Regulations 97 and 168 (2) of the Education and Care Services National Regulations require that every early childhood education and care service in Australia, including Out of School Hours Care Services 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.

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.2/div5/reg97>

This policy outlines the strategies and procedures the Service will adhere to in the event of a bush fire.

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	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	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

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

Administration of First Aid Policy Emergency Evacuation Policy Family Communication Policy Health and Safety Policy	Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Policy Supervision Policy Work Health and Safety Policy
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PURPOSE

We aim to ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children and staff from harm and hazards likely to cause injury, including potential injury from bushfires. The potential for extreme fire conditions varies greatly throughout Australia, both in frequency and severity. Each state and territory have varying mandatory regulations for implementing policies and procedures for being safe in areas where bushfires occur.

SCOPE

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

IMPLEMENTATION

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. This policy is to be implemented should a bush fire threaten our Service. During peak bush fire season, the nominated supervisor will monitor fire ratings through relevant authorities on a daily or hourly basis and communicate with all stakeholders as required. We are aware of our Fire Danger Rating and have appropriate fire safety equipment installed

and maintained at all times as per Jannali East Public School Bush Fire Emergency Management and Evacuation Plan.

DEFINITIONS

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 New South Wales the peak risk usually occurs in spring and early summer.

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 governments within each state and territory. Baseline data for bushfire prone areas is referred to as Bushfire Attack Level (BAL).

Fire danger rating (FDR): 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. Ratings range from *Low* to *Moderate*, to *Catastrophic*. FDR are maintained and updated by emergency services in each state or territory.

Nominated Supervisor will:

- Establish an Emergency Management Team (EMT) to lead the implementation of the Emergency and Evacuation Plan.
- Conduct a risk assessment to identify a potential bush fire risk to the Service.
- Contact the local council *or* use a program (such as that available at <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> for NSW) to determine if you are in a bush fire prone area.
- Ensure a current emergency and evacuation floor plan of the Service is clearly displayed near each exit of the service.
- Ensure emergency drills, including a bush fire drill are practiced with Educators and children as per the Emergency Evacuation Policy.
- Ensure a record is kept of each emergency evacuation drill practiced.
- Ensure the Service and Educators are prepared for bush fire conditions and prepared to respond quickly and appropriately during high fire danger periods.
- Ensure all fire safety equipment is installed and maintained regularly- (fire extinguishers, fire panels, smoke detectors, long hoses with nozzles, buckets etc.).

- Communicate with staff, Educators, and families about bush fire preparation information and provisions.
- Discuss bush fire response procedures at staff meetings.
- Ensure local emergency services have current contact details, including mobile number for emergency contact after hours.
- Ensure a clear and effective communication procedure during an emergency is implemented.
- Organise and communicate with off-site evacuation sites about emergency arrangements.
- Ensure flammable items are removed from the Service.
- Ensure all emergency exits are clear and accessible at all times.
- Conduct an 'emergency first aid kit / backpack audit' to ensure emergency contact information and supplies are current-
- Ensure all records of attendance of children, staff and volunteers is accurate each morning.
- Ensure current emergency phone numbers are on the notice board, including emergency services.
- Monitor the bush fire situation when the rating is above **High** through internet or radio.
- Ensure the *Fires Near Me* app (NSW Rural Fire Service) is installed on designated Service mobile phones.

Educators will:

- 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's emergency evacuation policies and procedures.
- Become familiar with the Service's emergency exits.
- Be aware of the designated assembly area.
- Be familiar with their role and responsibilities in the event of a bush fire.

SOURCE:

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQUA). (2018). Revised National Quality Standard.

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:

<https://www.cela.org.au/2018/01/07/bushfire-advice-for-childrens-services/>

NSW Government Education. Information sheet for the 2017/2018 bush fire season: Early childhood education and care: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education-service/latest-alerts/2017/bushfire-preparedness-and-the-national-law/ECE-Bushfires-information-sheet.pdf>

Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011).

NSW Government Education. Information sheet for the 2017/2018 bush fire season: Early childhood education and care: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education-service/latest-alerts/2017/bushfire-preparedness-and-the-national-law/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. Development Planning: https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/29271/DPP1079-Emergency-management-and-evacuation-plan-FORM.pdf

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

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	NOVEMBER 2019	NEXT REVIEW DATE	NOVEMBER 2020
MODIFICATIONS	New policy drafted.		