



BUSHFIRE or GRASSFIRE POLICY 2024

NQS

QA2	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 management - Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.

QA6	6.2.3	Community engagement - The service builds relationships and engages with its local community.
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National Regulations

Reg	168(2)(e)	Policies and procedures in relation to emergency and evacuation
	97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
	98	Telephone or other communication equipment

EYLF

LO2	Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
	Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

LO4	Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials
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Aim

Our service aims to keep all children, employees and visitors safe at all times. In the event of a bushfire or grassfire that may or has impacted the service, all managers and employees will take appropriate action to protect children, employees and visitors in line with recommendations and instructions from relevant emergency authorities.

Who is affected by this policy?

Children
Families
Educators
Community
Visitors

Implementation

Our service will prepare a Bushfire Action Plan should a bushfire affect the service's operations.

The aim of this Bushfire Action Plan is to outline the activities that educators, children, families and visitors to be undertaken in the following circumstances:

- On days of very high, severe, extreme fire ratings including Total Fire Bans
- When there is a fire in the local district.



- When a bushfire is threatening or impacting the site.
- During a period of recovery if a bushfire impacts the service.

During peak bush fire seasons, such as Spring and Summer, educators will monitor the Fire Danger Rating daily. If the Rating is Very High or above, educators will monitor the situation via the internet, radio or other form of local communication to stay aware of the current situation. Our service will not accept children for care on days when there is an extreme or catastrophic danger rating applying in the immediate area.

Our educators will follow a “leave early” policy rather than a “stay and defend” policy whenever a bushfire may impact the service. Educators monitor fire danger ratings daily during peak fire season.

Preparation

Before the Bush Fire danger period (1 October to 31 March) our nominated supervisor will:

- Ensure trees are trimmed to a distance of 2m from buildings.
- Ensure any dead branches, leaves and undergrowth are removed from around buildings.
- Ensure bark, heavy mulch, wood piles and any other flammable materials close to buildings are removed.
- Arrange for any lopping of branches if necessary
- Arrange for gutters and roofs to be regularly cleaned and kept free of leaves
- Ensure tile and paintwork on buildings is well maintained
- Ensure there is well maintained equipment to fight fires (e.g. Long hoses with nozzles, buckets, sprinklers, petrol/diesel powered pump)
- Ensure outdoor taps are working, have hoses attached and buckets nearby during very high, severe or extreme fire danger ratings.
- Prepare a bushfire/ emergency evacuation /survival kit which will be organised and stored somewhere that is easily accessible and it is maintained. This kit will include:
 - A copy of the bushfire action plan
 - Emergency contact details for each child are current and accessible
 - Child attendance registers
 - Emergency telephone numbers
 - Working torch and spare batteries
 - First aid kit
 - Educators/children medications and medical register e.g. Asthma medication
 - Mobile phone and charger
 - Drinking water
 - Woollen blankets
 - Towels
 - Gloves
 - Nappies
 - Nappy wipes
 - Change mat
 - Potty
 - Smoke mask
 - Goggles
 - Battery operated radio and spare batteries

This kit will be checked at the start of spring for contents.



Very High, Severe or Extreme Fire Danger Ratings including Total Fire Bans and when Fire is Reported in the Local District

On days where the Fire Danger Rating is Very High, Severe or Extreme, or when fire is reported in the local district, the service will inform families by posting a warning on the front door/foyer/noticeboard.

Children will be transitioned throughout the day as per our usual practice.

Any educators who planned to attend off-site training will stay at the service and have their training cancelled/rescheduled.

The nominated supervisor or WHS Officer or Fire Warden will ensure that:

- All gates have access keys and ensure the locks are in working order.
- All outdoor taps are in working order with hoses attached and buckets placed beside each exterior tap.
- Any outdoor industrial dumpster is closed at all times.
- All hazards are removed from passages and walkways and nothing is blocking emergency exits.

All educators will monitor conditions when outside and fire danger ratings. Educators will also ensure that no art and craft work, posters etc are hung outside and that garbage bins are emptied throughout the day.

Educators will ensure the Bushfire Survival Kit is easily accessible and contains a mobile phone which is in full working order, has a fully charged battery, and a battery charger. The Emergency Contact register, Daily Roll and the medical register for the day will also be added to the kit.

Family members will be required to provide a reliable contact number for the day together with their child's asthma medication.

Additional Steps Where Fire Reported in Local District

In addition to the steps outlined in the previous section of the policy:

The nominated supervisor will ensure all preparation activities have been undertaken. They will also ensure there is a current evacuation plan in place that can be implemented after considering any local road closures etc.

All children's activities outside the building will be cancelled. Educators, families and visitors to the service will be encouraged to reverse park their cars.

The nominated supervisor/educators will:

- turn off any gas cylinders
- ensure that whistles are in place beside each portable fire extinguisher so they can be used to notify everyone if a fire starts on site.

Educators will be diligent in ensuring children's personal items are placed in their bags when not in use.



Fire Reported in Immediate Vicinity or Directly Impacting the Service

The steps outlined in the previous sections will be followed immediately.

In addition:

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Contact and liaise with the emergency services
- Implement emergency evacuation procedures if it is safe to do so
- Implement emergency shelter in place procedures if it is not safe to evacuate. In this case the nominated supervisor will ensure educators:
 - Move all hoses inside building
 - Close all doors and windows
 - Access the roof space every 10-20 minutes to check for spot fires
 - Soak towels and place under external doors
 - Block drain pipes and fill gutters with water
 - Continually patrol property for spot fires and extinguish
 - Remove curtains, move furniture away from windows

The nominated supervisor will inform the approved provider of the situation and regularly keep them updated.

The approved provider/nominated supervisor will inform the regulator about the situation, advising the number of children affected, the educator ratios in place and any issues or injuries that have arisen.

Recovery after the Front has passed.

The nominated supervisor will:

- Ensure that no educators, family members, children or visitors leave the service or evacuation centre until the situation is considered safe by the emergency services
- At all times work to keep the regulator aware of the situation, including the number of children affected, emergency educators' ratios in place, any issues that arose and if possible, the impact to the service.

The nominated supervisor or Emergency Response Team made up of nominated educators will:

- Assess the situation and if necessary, make arrangements for the care of children for an extended period of time
- Continue to check the building and surrounds for 2-4 hours after the front has passed
- Arrange to have firefighting equipment, warning system and bushfire safety and first aid kits checked and readied for use again.

Educators at the service will stay on duty until all children have been collected or relief educators arrive.

Only a qualified educator will administer first aid should the situation arise.

Relevant educators will undertake a debrief of the fire emergency situation and the procedures undertaken. Educators will be requested to review their own roles, responsibilities and preparation before and during the crisis. The policy will be reviewed to ascertain its effectiveness.

If necessary, the approved provider/Nominated Supervisor will arrange for relevant authorities to check the safety of the site.



Fees and Charges

Attendance fees for the day will still be charged. CCB payments are available if your child is absent for any reason for up to 42 days each financial year. Should a family member be unable to collect, or arrange collection of their children within one hour of the usual operation hours of the service, late fees will apply as per our Fees Policy.

Sources

National Quality Standard

Education and Care Services National Regulations

The Bushfire Royal Commission Report Vic 2009

Early Years Learning Framework

www.mychild.gov.au

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011

Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011

www.rfs.nsw.gov.au 21/01/2019

Related Telephone Numbers

- Early Childhood Directorate 1800 619 113
- NSW Health 9391-9000
- National Asthma Council (03) 9929 4333
- Health Direct 1800 022 222
- Emergency Services 000
- Asthma Assist 1800 278 462

Amendment History

Version	Amendment	Short Description
103	Approved Provider update	Approved provider update

This policy will be updated to ensure compliance with all relevant legal requirements every year. Appropriate consultation of all stakeholders (including staff and families) will be conducted on a timely basis. In accordance with Regulation 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulation*, families of children enrolled will be notified at least 14 days and their input considered prior to any amendment of policies and procedures that have any impact on their children or family.

Date:	8 th March 2024
Version:	103
Last Amended By:	Amanda Grassby
Next Review:	8 th March 2025
Position:	Nominated Supervisor