

Quality Area 2 □ Children's Health and Safety

2.3: Each child is protected

Element 2.3.3: Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.

PURPOSE

This policy will outline the way in which Kurboroo Kindergarten reacts to days deemed by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) in consultation with fire and emergency services, as having a *Severe*, *Extreme* or *Code Red* Fire Danger Rating (FDR).

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Kurboroo Kindergarten is committed to:

- Providing a safe environment for all children enrolled at Kurboroo.
- Fulfilling their duty of care to the children of Kurboroo.
- Responding in a responsible manner to the threat of bushfires in our community.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisors, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending programs and activities at Kurboroo Kindergarten.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

The way kindergartens, child care centres family day schemes and schools in Victoria respond to bushfires has been revised.

New fire danger ratings and warnings have been introduced in Victoria to provide clear direction on the safest options for preserving life.

Schools, kindergartens and child care facilities at the highest risk of fire danger are placed on the Department of Education and Training (DET) Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR). Inclusion on this register is a trigger for the school, kindergarten or child care facility to pre-emptively close on days declared Code Red in their BoM region.



Kurboroo Kindergarten BoM region is the Central district.

DET, using data from various sources including the CFA, the Strategic Engineering Risk Assessment survey, Bushfire Attack Level assessments and local knowledge, will determine on a year by year basis the risk of our kindergarten to a bushfire and if it will be included on the BARR.

However, Kindertartens, through their committees, are able to determine what FDR would result in its closure.

Will Kurboroo Kindergarten close?

Kurboroo has decided that for the safety of all involved with the kindergarten, that during the fire season (November/December and February/March):

Kurboroo Kindergarten will be closed on a day that has been forecast/declared a **Severe, Extreme or Code Red** Fire Danger Rating (FDR) Day or otherwise as directed by DET.

Kurboroo Kindergarten has long held that the high risk of fire in Warranwood Reserve, the lack of accessibility for fire trucks and the danger many families would be putting themselves in trying to return home from the kindergarten, justifies this action.

Notification to Parents.

We ask the families at Kurboroo to be alert to the possibility of days being forecast/declared as ***Severe, Extreme or Code Red***.

During the fire season, this information is available in weather forecasts broadcasted on radio, TV and in major newspapers.

Families with internet access will find the CFA website useful, as it is regularly updated and the FDR is recorded up to four days in advance (www.cfa.vic.gov.au). There is also a free CFA app available to those with smart phones, which provides details of FDR forecasts.

Direct communication about the kindertartens closure will come in four forms:

- A notice will be posted to the kindergarten door the night before to advise parents of the closure the following day.
- An email will be sent by a kindergarten Executive Committee member to all parents who have provided the kindergarten with their email address.
- A notification will be sent out on FlexiSchools by the kindergarten secretary to advise parents of the closure the following day
- A Facebook notification will be posted by the a kindergarten Executive Committee member to the Kurboroo Kindergarten Facebook page

During the fire season, families should assume, if a day has been declared a *Severe, Extreme* or *Code Red* FDR, the kindergarten will be closed. Once the decision has been made to close the kindergarten, it will remain closed. If the weather situation changes and the FDR decreases, the kindergarten will still remain closed. This is to avoid confusion and to help families plan alternative care arrangements.

If Kurboroo Kindergarten is included on DET's Bushfire at Risk Register, then closure on a *Code Red* FDR will be enforced. Information in regards to this can be found at www.education.vic.gov.au/bushfires.

Responsibility of Closure

During the fire season, the kindergarten Executive Committee will monitor the forecasted FDR for the following day. If by midday, or any-time after the following day has been declared a *Severe, Extreme* or *Code Red* Fire Day, then the a kindergarten Executive Committee member will enact the closure procedures & notification of all staff and parents as above will be initiated.

It is intended that families will be provided with as much notice as possible of a planned closure. However, if unexpected weather patterns are experienced, closures may happen at shorter notice.

Impact on Families.

As Kurboroo Kindergarten will be closed on days declared a ***Severe, Extreme*** or ***Code Red*** FDR, staff will not be on site and parents will need to keep their child/ren at home or with a carer. If your child's session is cancelled due to Kurboroo Kindergarten being closed due to the high fire risk, there will be no refund of fees for this day.

4. DEFINITIONS

BARR: Bushfire at Risk Register.

BoM: Bureau of Meteorology.

CFA: Country Fire Authority of which our closest brigade is South Warrandyte.

Department of Education and Training (DET): The state government department responsible for the funding, licensing and regulation of children's services in Victoria.

FDR: Fire Danger Rating

5. SOURCES AND RELATED CENTRE POLICIES

Source

- CFA Website <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au>

Centre policies

- Emergency Management Plan

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Communicating to Kurboroo Kindergarten families as early as possible in the kindergarten year of our bushfire status and the impact on families.
- Construction of an emergency phone tree to fulfil requirements of the Emergency Management Plan.
- Ensure Emergency Management Plan is updated yearly, and distributed to DEECD and other agencies
- Ensure maintenance is conducted on Kurboroo Kindergarten to help protect against bushfires.
- Ensure that Kurboroo Kindergarten closure is communicated to parents through notices on-site at Kurboroo Kindergarten, email, FlexiSchools & Facebook.
- Inform DET of any changes to this policy

The Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor and staff are responsible for:

- Following the procedures of the Emergency Management Plan.
- Practicing emergency evacuations with the children.
- Reporting preventative bushfire maintenance to the committee.
- Placing a sign on the Kurboroo Kindergarten door advising parents of closure.

The parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Providing Kurboroo Kindergarten with up to date emergency contacts and keeping them current throughout the year.
- Following the advice of DET risk analysis.
- Being familiar with Kurboroo Kindergarten's emergency procedures.
- Ensure that your child is appropriately signed in and out of the kinder for each kinder session.

EVALUATION

To assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes, the committee will:

- Review this policy before the beginning of the upcoming fire season, in term three.

ATTACHMENTS

- CFA Fire Danger Rating Information.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Kurboroo Kindergarten 2011 Committee of Management at a committee meeting on **22nd February 2011**.

This policy, in its current state, was approved by the Kurboroo Kindergarten Committee of Management at a Committee Meeting in **February 2021**.

This policy will be reviewed every year, or varied earlier if necessary, and the committee will within 14 days of making any change, notify the parents/guardians of the children attending, of that change.

Review date: October 2021



Stay aware of the Fire Danger Rating and know what to do.

Fire Danger Rating predicts how a fire would behave if one started, including how difficult it would be to put out. The higher the rating, the more dangerous the conditions. The Fire Danger Rating is your trigger to act, so always stay safe. You need to stay aware of the Fire Danger Rating in your district. During the fire season, the Fire Danger Rating will feature in the weather forecasts and be broadcast on radio and TV and appear in some newspapers. It can also be found on the websites of the CFA, Department of Sustainability and Environment and Bureau of Meteorology or by calling the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on **1800 240 667**

	<p>In these conditions: The safest place to be is away from high risk bushfire areas.</p>	<p>Avoid forested areas, thick bush or long, dry grass. Know your trigger – make a decision about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – when you will leave – where you will go – how you will get there – when you will return – what you will do if you cannot leave
EXTREME	<p>Expect extremely hot, dry and windy conditions. If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving. Spot fires will start, move quickly and come from many directions. Homes that are situated and constructed or modified to withstand a bushfire, that are well prepared and actively defended, may provide safety. You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider staying with your property only if you are prepared to the highest level. This means your home needs to be situated and constructed or modified to withstand a bushfire, you are well prepared and you can actively defend your home if a fire starts. • If you are not prepared to the highest level, leaving high risk bushfire areas early in the day is your safest option. • Be aware of local conditions and seek information by listening to ABC Local Radio, commercial radio stations or Sky News TV, go to cfa.vic.gov.au or call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667
SEVERE	<p>Expect hot, dry and possibly windy conditions. If a fire starts and takes hold, it may be uncontrollable. Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety. You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety – check your bushfire survival plan. • If you are not prepared, leaving bushfire prone areas early in the day is your safest option. • Be aware of local conditions and seek information by listening to ABC Local Radio, commercial radio stations or Sky News TV, go to cfa.vic.gov.au or call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667
VERY HIGH HIGH LOW-MODERATE	<p>If a fire starts, it can most likely be controlled in these conditions and homes can provide safety. Be aware of how fires can start and minimise the risk. Controlled burning off may occur in these conditions if it is safe – check to see if permits apply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your bushfire survival plan • Monitor conditions • Action may be needed • Leave if necessary

more information contact: **1800 240 667** www.cfa.vic.gov.au

