

## **BUSHFIRE RISK POLICY**

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### **Best Practice – Quality Area 2.23 AND 2.3.3**

#### **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 Catastrophic, Extreme, High, Moderate Fire Danger Rating (FDR).

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

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##### **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, 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, childcare 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 childcare 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 childcare facility to pre-emptively close on days declared Catastrophic in their BoM region.

Kurboroo Kindergarten BoM region is the Central district.

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**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 **Extreme or Catastrophic** 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 **Extreme or Catastrophic**

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](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)). There is also a free CFA app and VicEmergency app available to those with smart phones, to maintain situational awareness, including determination of conditions such as Catastrophic days.

Direct communication about the kindergartens 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 and individual group pages.

During the fire season, families should assume, if a day has been declared a *Extreme* or *Catastrophic* 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 Catastrophic FDR will be enforced. Information in regards to this can be found at [www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/pages/bushfirerisk.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/pages/bushfirerisk.aspx)

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**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 *Extreme* or *Catastrophic* 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 experiences, closures may happen at short notice.

**Impact on Families.**

As Kurboroo Kindergarten will be closed on days declared a **Extreme or Catastrophic FDR**, staff will not be on site and parents will need to keep their child/ren at home or with a carer.

**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>

**6. Centre policies**

- Emergency Management Plan

**7. 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.

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- Inform DET of any changes to this policy

The Nominated 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.

## 8. 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.

## 9. ATTACHMENTS

- CFA Fire Danger Rating Information.

## 10. 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 **November 2022**.

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 2023**

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# Know Your Daily Fire Danger Rating



## Stay aware of the fire danger rating and know what to do.

- Fire Danger Ratings tell you how dangerous a fire could be if one started. The higher the rating the more dangerous the conditions. Fire Danger Ratings feature in weather forecasts during the fire season. Everyday you should:
- » Monitor conditions and official sources for warnings.
  - » If a fire starts near you, take action immediately to protect your life.
  - » Do not wait for a warning.
  - » Adhere to local regulations governing fire activity.
  - » Ensure any industrial and agricultural activities adhere to relevant guidelines.

To check your district's daily Fire Danger Rating, visit [cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au), download the **VicEmergency App** or call **1800 226 226**.

### What does it mean?

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

- » These are the most dangerous conditions for a fire.

**Fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous.**

- » These are dangerous fire conditions.
- » Expect hot, dry and windy conditions.

**Fires can be dangerous.**

**Most fires can be controlled.**

### What should I do?

**For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas.**

- » Your life may depend on the decisions you make, even before there is a fire.
- » For your survival, do not be in bushfire risk areas.
- » 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.

**Take action now to protect your life and property**

- » Check your bushfire 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 bushfire risk areas.
- » Leaving bushfire risk areas early in the day is your safest option.

**Be ready to act.**

- » 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 bushfire risk areas.

**Plan and prepare.**

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

Monitor conditions and official sources for warnings by going to [cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au), [emergency.vic.gov.au](http://emergency.vic.gov.au) or call the VicEmergency Hotline on **1800 226 226**

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