BUSHFIRE RISK POLICY

Quality Area 2 à - 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, practiced and implemented.

PURPOSE
This policy will outline the way in which Ellie V Pullin 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
Ellie V Pullin Preschool is committed to:
   • Providing a safe environment for all children enrolled at Ellie V Pullin.
   • Fulfilling their duty of care to the children of Ellie V Pullin.
   • 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 Ellie V Pullin Preschool.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION
The way kindergartens, child care centers 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 Early Childhood Development’s (DEECD) 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.

Ellie V Pullin Preschool BOM region is the Central district. DEECD, 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, Kindergartens, through their
ccommittees, are able to determine what FDR would result in its closure.

ELLIE V PULLIN PRESCHOOL BUSHFIRE RISK POLICY 2014
Ellie V Pullin Preschool has decided that for the safety of all involved with the
kindergarten, and due to the lack of a suitable evacuation point that during the
fire season (November/December and January/February/March) the kinder 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 DEECD. These
days all come under a Total Fire Ban Day.

Ellie V Pullin has made this decision due to the lack of a suitable evacuation point
should the kinder be threatened by a fire at the back in the McAlpin reserve. Due
to the lack of a suitable evacuation point close to the kinder, children would not
be able to shelter inside a building and Tortice drive may become congested with
parents collecting children and with CFA and police personnel.

Notification to Parents
We ask the families at Ellie V Pullin to be alert to the possibility of days being
forecast/declared as Severe, Extreme or Code Red (Total Fire Ban). 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 kindergartens closure will come in two forms:
1. A notice will be posted to the kindergarten door the night before to advise
parents of the closure the following day.
2. An email and SMS will also be sent the night before to all parents who
have provided the kindergarten with their email address and/or mobile
number.

However, families should assume that during the fire season, 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.
No staff or committee members will be at the kinder to greet families in the case
of a closure.

If the weather situation changes during the day, and the FDR decreases, the
kindergarten will still remain closed.

Responsibility of Closure
During the fire season and during the normal working week the following
members of staff and committee will take responsibility to inform families:
• The Nominated and Certified Supervisors will need to check the
forecasted FDR for the following day, before 12 noon.
• If the following day has been declared a Severe, Extreme or Code Red Fire Day, then they will need to initiate the closure procedures. A sign will need to be posted at the kindergarten, informing families of the kindergarten’s closure.
• Contact with the secretary will also need to be made, so that an email and SMS can be sent to all kindergarten families.
• The executive team will have the responsibility of checking the FDR forecast on the weekend and public holidays, and ensuring families are notified by email.

Impact on Families.
As the 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 the kindergarten being closed due to the high fire risk, there will be no refund of fees for this day.

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 Early Childhood Development (DEECD): The state government department responsible for the funding, licensing and regulation of children's services in Victoria.
FDR: Fire Danger Rating

SOURCES AND RELATED CENTRE POLICIES
CFA Website http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au
Centre policies - Emergency Management Plan

PROCEDURES
The Approved Provider is responsible for:
• Communicating to the 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 fulfill 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 the kindergarten to help protect against bushfires.
• Ensure that the kindergarten closure is communicated to parents through signs, email and SMS.
• Inform DEECD 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 signs on kindergarten doors and gates advising parents of closure.
The parents/guardians are responsible for:

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

This policy was adopted by the Ellie V Pullin Kindergarten 2014 Committee of Management at a committee meeting on 22nd February 2014.

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 2014