

Bushfire Policy

NQS

QA2	2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
	2.3.3	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

National Regulations and Law

116	Assessments of family day care residences and approved family day care venues.
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures.
177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider.

Aim

- To be prepared before, during and after bushfire season.
- Maintain good housekeeping in the outside environment.
- Maintain survival and emergency supplies.
- Maintain firefighting equipment.
- Monitor water supply.
- Monitor documents and records management.
- Keep up communication with families in regard to our policy and closure days.
- Ensure staff are up to date on procedures and training.

Implementation

Bushfires are a part of life when living and working in the Adelaide hills.

Our Service plan is to “stay and defend” in the event of a bushfire and prior to each bushfire season we prepare as best we can. However, advice from the CFS is that no building is completely safe on a catastrophic day, and as such our service will be closed on all catastrophic days as advised by the Department for Education and Child Development.

CFS and other emergency services may not be present during a bushfire; this is why it is extremely important our service has a policy and procedure to protect our children and staff during a bushfire.

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor will: Ensure the start and finish of the bushfire season is announced each year according to the CFS website.

(Approximately Nov to April) At the beginning of Bushfire Season:

- At least one staff member will have completed Bushfire Warden Training.
- Regularly staff will undergo bushfire training with an external provider
- The Director will ensure that all new and relieving staff are briefed about the requirements of the policy and Bushfire Action Plan (B.A.P)
- A Bushfire Audit of the centre will be taken both internally and externally and completed.
- Emergency kits will be checked and updated.
- All parents will be sent a test message through the MGM messaging system to ensure the system is working and all parents are contactable in the event of an emergency.
- On enrolment parents will be provided with a Bushfire pack containing: The Bushfire Policy, the Bushfire and Emergency Information letter, the Emergency Contact's Authorisation form.
- Up to date, completed, Emergency Authorisation forms will be filed and copies placed in the emergency kit.
- A copy of Stirling CELC policy and procedures will be sent to Stirling CFS head office, Bridgewater CFS head office and Aldgate CFS head office.
- Bushfire season reminders and information for parents will be included in the centre newsletter at least twice during the bushfire season.
- Updated copies of the Bushfire policy, preparation and B.A.P will be readily available and clearly labelled for parents to view at their convenience in the front foyer of the centre.
- Information about bush fire safety will be shared with the children as appropriate so they are aware and prepared.
- Evacuation practices will be carried out with staff and children every three months.
- Documents on computers in the centre will be backed up regularly to the cloud.

Bushfire Procedures

- The following procedures will be carried out in conjunction with the service bush fire preparation plan and action plan.
- A red warning sign "TOTAL FIRE BAN DAY" will be displayed on the front fence to alert parents to be vigilant in monitoring the situation in the area on ABC radio 891 AM or the CFS website and inform staff of any changes to their contact details or emergency contacts.
- Staff will carry out required preparation duties listed in the red folder on the staff room door on all "Total Fire Ban" days.
- Staff will monitor fire warning messages on ABC radio 891AM and the office will monitor the CFS websites

- Families are encouraged to stay home on a Total Fire Ban day if it meets their own family Bushfire Action Plan. The centre will be open on these days and parents will be required to pay full fees or swap a day within the week (subject to vacancies) if they choose not to come in on a Total Fire Ban day.
- Parents need to pay particular attention to signing their children in and out on Total Fire Ban days.
- All excursions away from the centre may be cancelled depending on numbers of children involved and the location of the excursion.
- Any off-site meetings or training may be cancelled at the Director's discretion.
- If a fire does threaten the centre, ***PARENTS MAY NOT RECEIVE INDIVIDUAL NOTIFICATION BY PHONE OR EMAIL.***
If phone lines and networks are available, and staff are not busy with children, the MGM Messaging system will be used to notify parents by text message or email.
- If fire threatens the centre, all staff and children will remain at the centre and follow the Bushfire Action Plan unless otherwise directed by Police and Emergency Services.
- All staff will comply with directions and instructions given by Police and Emergency Services.
- If evacuated by Emergency Services, parents will be notified of our whereabouts by the centre mobile phone if possible. Otherwise parents should listen to ABC radio 891 AM or call the Bushfire information hotline on 1300362361. The evacuation point will be determined by Emergency Service personnel.
- Provisions are in place should we be required to stay longer at the centre due to lock down.
- Parents will not be able to collect their children unless it is deemed safe. Children will **ONLY** be released to persons listed on the pink Emergency Authorisation form. Children must be signed out before they can leave the centre or evacuation point.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FIRE DANGER RATING SCALE			
CATASTROPHIC Code Red	100+	CENTRE CLOSED	Schools, preschools and centres in the affected Fire Ban District with an Extreme, very high or high risk rating
EXTREME	75-95	CENTRE OPEN (unless advised to close)	Department for Education and Child Development to take advice from CFS in Adelaide Hills regarding school, preschool, centre closure.
SEVERE	50-74	CENTRE OPEN	Normal bushfire procedures apply
VERY HIGH	24-49	CENTRE OPEN	Normal bushfire procedures apply
HIGH	12-23	CENTRE OPEN	Normal bushfire procedures apply
MODERATE/LOW	0-11	CENTRE OPEN	Normal bushfire procedures apply

Communication with Families

- Parents are encouraged to refer to the CFS Website to keep up to date with current incidents.
- Information regarding Bushfire policy, Preparation Plan, BAP, updates and information to be included in a pack at the beginning of the Bushfire season, newsletters and centre notice board throughout the bushfire season.
- Parents will be informed of a total fire ban day on the front gate, the parent information board.
- Parents to have access to the centre's Bushfire policy, Preparation Plan and B.A.P
- Parents made aware of centre's MGM Messaging system and testing procedures.
- Parents must be aware that whilst every effort will be made to contact them through text message and/ or email in the event we are under threat, or we have been evacuated, it may not be possible if all lines of communication or electricity is down. Parents must listen for information the ABC radio 891 or call the Information hotline on 1300 362 361.
- Parents are advised through Bushfire Policy to become familiar with the CFS Information website and warning systems.

- Parents will be made aware that full fees apply for nonattendance on Total Fire Ban day or they need to swap their day for that week if vacancies are available.

The centre will be closed on Catastrophic days. Parents will need to make other care arrangements for their children on catastrophic closure days. No staff will be on site. Fees are not charged for up to two closure days per year for catastrophic closure days. (Since the introduction of the new Fire Danger rating system, there has only been one catastrophic day per year) Child Care Benefit is payable during a local emergency.

The CFS Warning System

EMERGENCY WARNING: You are in danger and need to take action immediately. You will be impacted by fire.

WATCH & ACT: Fire is approaching you, conditions are changing, take action now to protect yourself and your family.

ADVICE: A fire has started; there is no immediate danger: general information to keep you up to date with developments.

The Bushfire Watch and Act Messages will be issued when:

- Potential threat to public safety in the immediate area
- When a bushfire is burning out of control under very high or catastrophic weather conditions
- The Bushfire Emergency warning message will be preceded by a siren sounded by the SEWS
- Bushfire Watch and Act Emergency Warning messages will be issued by ABC radio 891 AM and on the CFS website.

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Part 4.3 and 4.7, Regulation 116 & 177, <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/full>, accessed 03 August 2020
- ACECQA – National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2, <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard>, accessed 03 August 2020

CFS website: <https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/home.jsp>

DECD website: <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/>

Policy Reviewed: December 2020

Next Review Date: August 2021

Ratified by Governing Council meeting held December 2nd, 2020.