

## Bushfire Policy

### NQS

QA2	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
	2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised 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			
<b>CATASTROPHIC</b> <b>Code Red</b>	100+	<b>CENTRE CLOSED</b>	Schools, preschools and centres in the affected Fire Ban District with an Extreme, very high or high risk rating
<b>EXTREME</b>	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.
<b>SEVERE</b>	50-74	CENTRE OPEN	Normal bushfire procedures apply
<b>VERY HIGH</b>	24-49	CENTRE OPEN	Normal bushfire procedures apply
<b>HIGH</b>	12-23	CENTRE OPEN	Normal bushfire procedures apply
<b>MODERATE/LOW</b>	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 centre will be closed on Watch and Act and Emergency Warning Days- Please see attached 'Watch and Act' & 'Emergency Warning' Bushfire Procedure**

## 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: January 2022*

*Ratified by Governing Council meeting held December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020.*

## **'Watch and Act' & 'Emergency Warning'** **Bushfire Procedure**

This procedure refers to the following terms as deemed by *CFS South Australia*.

**EMERGENCY WARNING:** *This the highest level of message. The message tells you that you will be impacted by fire and you need to take action immediately. This message will be preceded by an emergency warning signal (a siren sound) to get your attention. The message will also contain information about the severity of the fire, time to impact and what you should do.*

**WATCH & ACT:** *A fire is approaching, conditions are changing, and your life may come under threat. You need to act now to prepare for the approaching fire front and protect yourself and your family.*

### **Closure**

When **either warning** has been issued by the CFS for the Mt Lofty Ranges area and is less than 12 hours until the opening time of 7am at Stirling Community Early Learning Centre, the following procedure will take effect. Opening Team Leader staff during bushfire season will follow the below steps no later than 6am

When **either warning** has been issued by the CFS for the Mt Lofty Ranges area and is 12 hours until the opening time of 7am at Stirling Community Early Learning Centre (i.e. 7pm) the following procedure will take effect.

Centre Director, OR Assistant Director in case of Centre Director absence, OR Centre Administrator in case of Centre Director AND Assistant Director absence, OR Room Leaders in case of Centre Administrator AND Centre Director AND Assistant Director absence will:

1. Check the CFS website for most current (updated every 5 minutes) Bushfire Advice regarding Stirling- <https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/warnings-and-incidents/>
2. Contact CFS Bushfire Information Hotline on 1800 362 361 to confirm current Watch & Act/Emergency Warning for Pine Street, Stirling
3. Check Department of Education Bushfire School Closure information on R1 and R2 zones (Mt Lofty Ranges) to follow advice/guidelines- <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/parents-and-families/safety-and-wellbeing/bushfires/bushfire-updates>
4. Tune to ABC radio 891 AM as CFS Bushfire Watch and Act Emergency Warning messages will be issued here
5. Contact Governing Council Chair Person, OR Deputy Chair Person in case of Chair Person absence; OR Treasurer in case of Deputy Chair Person AND Chair Person absence; OR Secretary in case of Treasurer AND Deputy Chair Person AND Chair Person absence to advise of current CFS and Department of Education directives and confirm closure of Centre
6. Access MGM messaging system via personal lap top, computer or phone to send Centre Closure message to all parents, staff and contractors
7. Centre Closure message- Stirling Community ELC is CLOSED and will NOT BE OPEN tomorrow (date) due to CFS Watch and Act/Emergency Warning. It is not safe to attend the premises. Enable your Bushfire Plan.
8. Contact Governing Council representative to confirm closure of Centre

## Re-Opening

When the Centre is CLOSED and **either warning** has been **downgraded** to REDUCED THREAT message by the CFS for the Mt Lofty Ranges area the following procedure will take effect 24 hours after the initial closure message was sent.

Centre Director, OR Assistant Director in case of Centre Director absence, OR Centre Administrator in case of Centre Director AND Assistant Director absence, OR Room Leaders in case of Centre Administrator AND Centre Director AND Assistant Director absence will:

1. Check the CFS website for most current (updated every 5 minutes) Bushfire Advice regarding Stirling- <https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/warnings-and-incidents/>
2. Contact CFS Bushfire Information Hotline on 1800 362 361 to confirm current downgrade to Reduced Threat for Pine Street, Stirling
3. Check Department of Education Bushfire School Closure information on R1 and R2 zones (Mt Lofty Ranges) to follow advice/guidelines- <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/parents-and-families/safety-and-wellbeing/bushfires/bushfire-updates>
4. Tune to ABC radio 891 AM as CFS Bushfire Watch and Act Emergency Warning messages will be issued here
5. Contact Governing Council Chair Person, OR Deputy Chair Person in case of Chair Person absence; OR Treasurer in case of Deputy Chair Person AND Chair Person absence; OR Secretary in case of Treasurer AND Deputy Chair Person AND Chair Person absence to advise of current CFS and Department of Education directives and re-opening DATE AND TIME of Centre

6. Access MGM messaging system via personal lap top, computer or phone to send Centre Re-Opening message to all parents, staff and contractors
7. Centre Re-Opening message template - Stirling Community ELC will RE-OPEN on (date) from 7.30am due to CFS Reduced Threat Message. We hope to see you then.
8. Contact Governing Council representative to confirm re-opening of Centre

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

### **The Approved Provider will:**

- Identify potential higher risk months and season's where CFS may issue Watch and Act and Emergency Warning
- Undertake risk assessments for potential events that may arise.
- Develop, implement and review procedures for Bushfire Watch and Act and Emergency Warning

### **Centre Administration will:**

- Ensure Director, Assistant Director and Centre Administrator have updated contacts including staff, parents and contractors on MGM messaging system
- Ensure that staff have access to emergency telephone numbers.
- Ensure that all rooms have up to date emergency contact lists

### **Educators will:**

- Enable their own Bushfire Plan if in affected zone
- Not come to the centre once message has been received regarding Centre closure
- Acknowledge via return text to the Director, or Assistant Director in case of Centre Director absence, they have received Centre Closure message
- Arrive at the centre only after Centre Re-Open message has been received  
Acknowledge via return text to the Director, or Assistant Director in case of Centre Director absence, they have received Centre Re-Open message

### **Parents will:**

- Enable their own Bushfire Plan if in affected zone
- Not come to the centre once message has been received regarding Centre closure
- Arrive at the centre only after Centre Re-open message has been received



## NQS

QA2	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
	2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented

## National Regulations

168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures.
167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider.

## Sources

- CFS: Your Guide To Bushfire Safety; [https://safecom-files-v8.s3.amazonaws.com/current/docs/cfs\\_brochure\\_your\\_guide\\_to\\_bushfire\\_safety.pdf](https://safecom-files-v8.s3.amazonaws.com/current/docs/cfs_brochure_your_guide_to_bushfire_safety.pdf); accessed on 12.02.2021
- ACECQA: NQS Quality Area 2; <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-2-childrens-health-and-safety>; accessed on 12.02.2021
- Department of Education: Bushfire And Your Child's School or Pre-School; [https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/bushfire-and-your-childs-school-or-preschool-brochure.pdf?acsf\\_files\\_redirect](https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/bushfire-and-your-childs-school-or-preschool-brochure.pdf?acsf_files_redirect); accessed on 12.02.2021
- Stirling Community Early Learning Centre Bushfire Policy; 2020
- Department of Education; <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/parents-and-families/safety-and-wellbeing/bushfires/list-high-bushfire-risk-schools-preschools-and-kindergartens>; accessed on 12.02.2021
- Country Fire Service; <https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/bans-and-ratings/>; accessed on 12.02.2021

# Bushfire Preparation and Procedures

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## NQS

QA2	2.2	Each child is protected
	2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented

## National Regulations

12	Meaning of serious incident
89	First aid kits
93	Administration of medication
94	Exception to authorisation requirement- anaphylaxis or asthma emergency
98	Telephone or other communication equipment
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures.

## General Housekeeping

To be maintained throughout the year with special attention during Bushfire Season. A record of this is kept with the Bushfire Audit that is completed before Bushfire season begins on December 1<sup>st</sup> each year. This is kept in the office in the folder labelled Bushfire Information and Actions.

- Removal of all fallen tree branches, leaves, weeds and other debris or undergrowth around the building/s
- Prune all tree limbs less than two metres from the ground and clear undergrowth
- Prune limbs and branches that are overhanging or touching the building/s
- Cut the grass around the building/s
- Remove flammable material such as leaves, bark, wood, flammable materials such as cardboard boxes etc,
- Regularly clear out gutters and roof gullies of the building/s
- Check eaves, open air vents, cavities and other opening within the building/s and seal
- Check roof spaces for loose tiles and gaps and repair as necessary
- Check under raised timber decking around the building, clear any debris and seal to prevent sparks or embers
- Ensure timber and paintwork on all buildings and fixtures are maintained
- Ensure that annexure and other structures attached or near the building/s are well maintained and are kept clear of rubbish

- Ensure that the property access is clear for emergency vehicles if needed
- The service to undertake a risk assessment of the building/s and site to ensure it's prepared in the event of a bushfire

## Survival and Emergency Supplies

SCELC will maintain survival and emergency supplies that can be found in the Programming Room. The kits are checked regularly throughout the year, in particular the Bushfire season, and maintained.

Protective clothing for staff (6 sets)

- Gloves- sturdy or rigger
- Sturdy shoes or work boots with thick leather soles and socks made of natural fibre
- Hat or hard helmet- to protect from sparks and embers
- Long sleeved shirt and trousers or overalls- made from natural fibres to protect the skin
- Mask or wet flannel or tea towel to protect the face and filter smoke
- Goggles or glasses- to protect eyes from smoke and embers
- Hydrating backpack- to be filled with drinking water

Emergency kit:

- 3 portable battery radios
- Mobile phone
- In date drinking water/food for the children
- Spare nappies, wipes, gloves, bottles
- First-Aid Kit, Asthma inhaler, EpiPen and additional supplies
- Children's Emergency Phones Numbers list

## Staff Training

- The centre will schedule and rehearse the Bushfire Action Plan with the children regularly basis
- Staff will be allocated tasks as part of the preparation plan on Total Fire Ban days
- Staff will receive pre-fire season updates and instructions about the content and requirements of centre's Bushfire Policy, preparation and action plans. The Bushfire Policy and Preparation and Procedures are available to read at any time in the Policy Folder in the foyer.
- All staff will have an opportunity to use the fire fighting pumps, sprinkler system, hoses, and backpacks as part of training and preparation. This includes casual staff and students.

*Policy Reviewed: November 2021*

*Next review date: November 2022*

*Ratified by Governing Council meeting held November 2021*

