Wideview
Out of School
Hours Care

37 Wideview Rd
Berowra Heights
NSW 2082
Ph 9456 6513
Email wideviewooshc@gmail.com

Policy 29

Bushfire Policy

Policy Statement

Bushfires are an inherent part of Australia's environment. Wideview Outside School Hours Care Service aim to ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children and staff from harm and hazards likely to cause injury, including potential injury from bushfires. The potential for extreme fire conditions varies greatly throughout Australia, both in frequency and severity. When experienced close to populated areas, significant loss is possible. This policy outlines the strategies and procedures the Service will adhere to in the event of a bush fire, including information about Service closure during an emergency evacuation.

Links to Education and Care Services National Regulations and National Quality Standard

QUALITY AREA		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
2.2.2	Incident and emergency	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
12	Meaning of serious incident
51	Conditions on service approval (safety, health and wellbeing of children)
89	First Aid Kits
93	Administration of medication
97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
98	Telephone or other communication equipment
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

Procedure

The Australian climate is frequently hot, dry, and susceptible to drought. The widely varied fire seasons are reflected in the continent's different weather patterns. The peak risk usually occurs in spring and early summer.

1. Management/ nominated supervisor will:

1.1 Contact the local council *or* use a program (such as that available at https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/building-in-a-bush-fire-area/planning-for-bush-fire-protection/bush-fire-prone-land/check-bfpl for NSW) to determine if you are in a bush fire prone area.

1.2 Create and update the Service's emergency management and evacuation policies and procedures regularly.

1.3 Liaise with the school and emergency service to assess potential bush fire risk to the Service.

1.4 Ensure a current emergency and evacuation floor plan of the Service is displayed.

1.5 Ensure emergency drills are practiced with Educators and children.

1.6 Ensure a record is kept of each emergency evacuation drill practiced.

1.7 Ensure the emergency first aid kit / backpack is organised and stored in an area that is easily accessible.

1.8 Ensure the Service and Educators are prepared for bush fire conditions and prepared to respond quickly and appropriately during high fire danger periods.

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1.9 Ensure the Fire Danger Rating (FDR) is checked daily during risk times (available from https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fdr-and-tobans for NSW).

1.10 Communicate with staff, Educators, and families about bush fire preparation information and provisions.

1.11 Liaise with the school to ensure the WOOSHC buildings' gutters are cleaned out and free from dry leaves and other debris.

1.12 Organise and communicate with off-site evacuation sites about emergency arrangements.

1.13 Monitor the bush fire situation when the rating is above High through internet or radio.

1.14 Ensure the *Fires Near Me* app is installed on designated Service mobile phones (NSW).

1.15 Create an Emergency Plan identifying information including:

- Name and address of the Service
- Contact details of Service (including designated mobile phone number)
- Number of employees
- Number of occupants with support needs
- Details of location or address to evacuate to if required.
- Evacuation and transportation arrangements if required to evacuate.

2. Educators will:

2.1 Examine the Service grounds during their indoor and outdoor safety checks to ensure flammable and/or combustible materials (e.g., dead leaves and bark, chemicals) have been removed regularly and liaise with the school if there are larger items/ areas to be cleared.

2.2 Become familiar and confident with the Service emergency evacuation policies and procedures.

2.3 Become familiar with the Service's emergency exits.

2.4 Be familiar with their role and responsibilities in the event of a bush fire.

3. During bushfire season: fire danger ratings

3.1 Fire danger ratings provide a prediction of the consequences of a fire, should one start in the area. The higher the rating, the more dangerous the conditions are predicted to be. Fire danger ratings are issued each day during fire season and should be used as a trigger to take action.

3.2 WOOSHC will follow the following procedures in specific danger ratings:

- **Moderate Danger Ratings** –
  - WOOSHC staff will monitor and be alert for any fires in the area.
- **High Danger Ratings** –
  - There's a heightened risk. Be alert for fires in your area.
  - Be alert for fires in your area, plan and prepare.
  - WOOSHC staff will remain vigilant and be prepared in case of a need to evacuate children.
- **Extreme Danger Rating** –
  - These are dangerous fire conditions.
  - Responsible Person (RP) on duty, will monitor the Fire Danger Rating, Fires Near Me app, and local Rural Fire Services social media accounts. checks should be conducted hourly.

  Should the danger be in the local area –
  - Set up hoses and water supplies.

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- Gather evacuation bag, mobile phone, and iPads ready for easy access.
- based on advice from Wideview Public School and the education department, WOOSHC will contact all parents to collect their children from care as soon as they are safely able to do so, unless the school has already done so
- WOOSHC may not operate, depending on advice from Wideview Public School and the Education Department.

- **Catastrophic Danger Rating** –
  - These are the most dangerous conditions for a fire.
  - Neither WOOSHC nor Wideview Public School will operate if the local area is in a catastrophic danger rate. If WOOSHC is already open when the danger rating is upgraded to catastrophic, parents will be contacted to arrange for collection of their children from care immediately, or as soon as they are able to safely do so.
  - WOOSHC will liaise with local authorities and evacuate to the designated location.
  - No-one is to be on the school site for any reason. This includes staff.

3.3 Should the danger be assessed to be significant and immediate to the service or local community, the Nominated supervisor/ RP on duty may commence contacting parents without advice from Wideview Public School or the Education Department, if outside of their normal operating hours.

4. Fire conditions in the local area:

4.1 In the event of a bushfire in the local area, the supervisor on duty should contact the RFS for up-to-date information. This information will then inform the course of action taken. Bushfire threats may not be of immediate threat to the WOOSHC environment and may require several different courses of action.

4.2 In the case of a bushfire in the local area there are three alert levels which can be used. Each of these alert levels requires different action.

- Advice Alert – A bushfire has started but there is no immediate danger.
  - The supervisor on duty will monitor the fire danger ratings, Fires Near Me app, local RFS social media accounts, and local radio.
  - Air quality will be monitored, and activities will be planned and adjusted accordingly.



- Watch and Act Alert – Bushfire conditions are changing, and the threat is increasing.
  - Alert parents and carers as soon as possible.
  - If smoke is heavy, all children will be kept indoors.
  - WOOSHC will prepare hoses and water supplies and other emergency equipment.
  - WOOSHC will liaise with the Local RFS Control Centre and, if required, will implement our Bushfire Emergency Management and Evacuation Plan.



- Emergency Warning Alert – This is the highest level of alert.
  - WOOSHC will liaise with the Local RFS Control Centre
  - WOOSHC will implement our Bushfire Emergency Management and Evacuation Plan.



5. Safety procedures

The safety of the children and staff must be the guiding principle in determining the course of action to take. Any decision to evacuate should be based on the assessment of the actual or potential danger and on the advice of emergency services. Decisions concerning sheltering or evacuation and the selection of the designated safe assembly areas and access routes should be made according to the circumstances and at the time of the emergency and from advice form emergency services.

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Sheltering Procedures:
In the event that an approaching bushfire threatens our school premises, or severely impacts the air quality of the school, our primary action is to Shelter in Place/Lock down.

- Children will be moved into the large WOOSHC building (designated refuge).
- All windows and doors will be closed to reduce atmospheric smoke from the fire entering the building and triggering asthma attacks. Wet blankets will be used to seal openings where smoke can enter, if necessary.
- The roll will be called to ensure all children, staff and visitors are present.
- Children will be kept calm, reassured, and kept busy with indoor games and activities.

Should the warning be upgraded to catastrophic:

- The large WOOSHC building will remain the designated refuge.
- Parents will be contacted and asked to arrange for their children to be picked up. Parents will be assured that their children are safe and will be kept safe until they are able to be collected.
- Parents will be updated if WOOSHC is evacuated with location to collect children, reassure parents, parent safety is a consideration and at no time should time limits or stress be placed on them, as this could cause accidents.

Offsite Evacuation Procedures:
WOOSHC may evacuate offsite if directed to do so by emergency services or the RFS, or if the RP on duty judges that an evacuation is necessary. Where possible the supervisor will liaise with local emergency services or ring 000 before making the decision.

If an offsite evacuation is to occur:

- Parents will be informed.
- Safe transportation will be coordinated. This may include walking.
- Arrangements will be made for the safe collection of children from the designated evacuation area.

Sources, further reading and useful websites

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia (2011).

Policy review information -

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its Policies and Procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur, and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and maintain the highest standards of child safety and practice.

Review Date	Date completed	By Whom	Collaborated	Comment
Sep 2022	30 Sep 2022	Brandi (Manager)	Staff Committee Parents	
Sep 2023	2 Oct 2023	Brandi (Manager)		
Sep 2024	30 Sep 2024	Brandi (Manager)		
Sep 2025	26 Sep 2025	Brandi (Manager)		
Sep 2026	30 Sep 2026	Brandi (Manager)		

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BUSHFIRE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND EVACUATION PLAN

Name of Facility Wideview OOSHC
Address: Wideview Public School, 37 Wideview Road Berowra Heights
Council Name: Hornsby
Lat:/Long: 33.6256° S, 151.1468° E
Contact Person: Brandi Heitman
Date of Plan: Sep 2026
Type of Facility: OOSH Service on School Premises

Facility Details:

WOOSHC is a school-based service, in the grounds of Wideview Public School. The school, and therefore WOOSHC is designated as being in a bushfire prone area by the Rural Fire Service and is identified on the NSW DoE Bushfire Register as being at possible high risk. This means that the school, and WOOSHC itself, may be affected by bushfire, especially during Spring and Summer.

Number Of Students: licensed for 145, current average is 55 term time / vacation care
Number of Employees: 15
Number Of Buildings Utilised: 3 demountable buildings, hall, library, and outdoor areas.

Support Needs of children who attend care regularly and Educators (these vary depending on days):

Students with Anaphylaxis / Allergy
Students with Medical diagnosis - ADHD/ASD/ANXIETY
Students With Asthma
Educators with Diabetes / Asthma

Emergency Contacts

Name of organisation	Office/contact	Phone number
Emergency services		000
NSW Rural Fire Service	Local Fire Control Centre	(02) 9883 2000
Berowra Fire and rescue		(02) 9456 3536
Berowra Rural Fire Brigade		(02) 9456 4044
NSW Rural Fire Service	Bush fire information line	1800 679 737 1800 NSW RFS
NSW Rural Fire Service	Website	www.rfs.nsw.gov.au
Police Force	Hornsby	(02) 9476 4318
Regulatory Authority	Hotline	1800 619 113
Regulatory Authority	NQA ITS	https://public.nqaits.acecqa.gov.au/Pages/Landing.aspx