



CAMP GAN YISROEL NSW
Chabad Youth NSW
Bushfire or Grassfire Policy

Aim

Our service aims to keep all children, employees and visitors safe at all times. In the event of a bushfire or grassfire that may or has impacted the service, all managers and employees will take appropriate action to protect children, employees and visitors in line with recommendations and instructions from relevant emergency authorities.

Implementation

Where bushfires or grassfires have been identified as a potential risk, this policy forms part of our Emergency Management Plan as set out in our Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy. Bushfire and grassfire emergency procedures must be rehearsed at least every three months so all employees and children can respond effectively. The Nominated Supervisor will ensure all staff, including relief staff, and families are aware of this policy through staff induction and information provided to families.

To ensure the safety of all children, employees and visitors, the Nominated Supervisor will prepare a Fire Action Plan covering:

- **Fire ratings in the local area:**
 - **High** — fires can be dangerous. Be ready to act.
 - **Extreme** — fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous. Take action now to protect life and property.
 - **Catastrophic** — if a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost. For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas.
- a bushfire or grassfire in the local district
- a bushfire or grassfire threatening or impacting the service
- recovery after a bushfire or grassfire impacts the service

As we are located on or near a school site, the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will work with school staff to ensure a consistent, co-ordinated approach, including potential access to shelter-in-place buildings nominated by the school as a last resort. The Nominated Supervisor and all educators will follow a “leave early” policy rather than a “stay and defend” policy whenever a bushfire or grassfire may impact the service.

Preparation

The Nominated Supervisor will diarise prevention measures before and during the bushfire danger period (generally 1 October to May, although risk varies).

Before bushfire danger period

- trees trimmed so they are at least 2 metres from buildings
- gutters and roofs regularly cleaned
- dead branches, leaves and undergrowth removed from around buildings
- bark, heavy mulch, wood piles and other flammable materials near buildings removed and stored safely



- firefighting equipment checked and well maintained (e.g. long hoses with nozzles, buckets, sprinklers, petrol/diesel pump, portable fire extinguishers)
- location of current bushfire safer places and last resort refuges reviewed with RFS NSW and communicated to all employees
- emergency/safe refuge kit prepared and checked at the start of Spring

Before and during the bushfire danger period

- regularly check for and remove vegetation, debris or rubbish that may be easily ignited
- check all staff can operate relevant fire equipment and organise training if required
- ask families to confirm or update their emergency contact details
- check children's asthma management plans are current and medication has not expired

The Nominated Supervisor will implement as many additional risk-reduction measures as possible in high-risk areas, including spark-proofing windows and openings, sealing roof gaps, extending wall cladding to the ground, installing sprinkler systems with metal fittings, and planting lower-flammability vegetation.

During peak bushfire seasons the Nominated Supervisor will monitor the Fire Danger Rating daily and act consistently with the Fire Action Plan. Bushfire information is available from local ABC radio, bushfire apps (e.g. 'Fires Near Me'), traffic apps, NSW RFS social media, the Bush Fire Hotline (1800 679 737), and Fire Rescue NSW.

Closure due to Bushfire or Grassfire Risk

We will not accept children on days when there is a catastrophic danger rating in the immediate area. Where there is a catastrophic local fire warning, schools are generally directed to close, and the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor may use this to inform a decision about closing the service. Services on or close to school grounds will liaise with school Principals and staff for a consistent, co-ordinated approach. We will not operate any bus routes on catastrophic fire danger days.

If the service will be closed, the Nominated Supervisor will ensure that:

- families are advised as soon as possible (e.g. via SMS, social media or apps)
- information about the closure is posted on the service website and social media
- advice is updated if the service will be closed for more than one day
- nobody, including staff, remains on site on days of closure

Fire Action Plan

The Nominated Supervisor and educators will protect children from smoky, low air-quality environments by keeping children indoors with windows, doors and air vents closed and sealed where possible, using fans or air conditioning on recycle mode where available.

High Fire Danger Rating

Educators will transition children as usual but keep them indoors if it is very smoky. The Nominated Supervisor will inform families of the rating, check keys/gates/exits and outdoor taps and hoses, monitor conditions, and ready the Emergency/Safe Refuge Kit (including a charged phone and charger, emergency contacts, attendance sheets, the medication register and all medications including emergency asthma inhalers). Educators will empty bins, keep dumpsters closed, and keep passageways and exits clear.



Extreme or Catastrophic Fire Danger Ratings

Where the service is open on extreme or catastrophic days, the Nominated Supervisor may pre-emptively close at any time, and children must be collected as soon as possible. Where this is not safe or possible, children will be evacuated or cared for under our emergency management procedures. In addition to High-rating steps, the Nominated Supervisor will:

- ensure all families are aware of the rating, the potential for closure, and that children may need urgent collection
- ask families for a reliable contact number and to monitor service channels
- cancel offsite training and children's outdoor activities, including excursions and bush play
- review evacuation plans, routes and transport requirements, considering road closures
- ensure firefighting equipment is ready, buckets are placed beside outside taps, cars are reverse-parked, computer files are backed up, gas cylinders are turned off, and air conditioning is off unless confident it is not drawing in smoky air

Fire in Local, Immediate or Impacting Area

If there is a fire in the local area, the Nominated Supervisor will assess the risk of impact, in consultation with relevant authorities, and act consistently with the local fire danger rating, which may include the Emergency Evacuation Procedure. If a fire is in the immediate area or impacting the service, the Nominated Supervisor will immediately call 000, follow all advice, and if safe implement the Emergency Evacuation Procedure. If evacuation is impossible, the Nominated Supervisor will call 000 and implement the Shelter-in-Place Emergency Procedure.

Fees and Charges

Attendance fees for the day will still be charged. Where a family is unable to collect or arrange collection of their children within the usual operating hours, late fees apply as per our Fees Policy.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure — Bushfire and Grassfire

The Nominated Supervisor must monitor conditions and advice from emergency services.

1. **Nominated Supervisor sounds the alarm, states an evacuation (not practice) is taking place, and calls 000.**
2. **Nominated Supervisor implements emergency evacuation arrangements, including the transport plan if required.**
3. **All educators on breaks return to their room to help evacuate children to the assembly area.**
4. **Room Leaders advise which educators will evacuate mobile children and assist those who cannot walk.**
5. **Educators evacuate children to the assembly area, using stairs not lifts, conducting a head count, and locating any child if safe to do so.**
6. **Nominated Supervisor advises which staff will check toilets, kitchen, playrooms and outside areas and guide remaining children and visitors to the assembly point.**
7. **Designated staff evacuate toilets, kitchen, playrooms and outside areas to the assembly area.**



8. **Nominated Supervisor collects attendance sheets, visitor register and the Emergency Kit (including medications and parent phone numbers) before leaving.**
9. **Educators check all children are present using attendance sheets and report absences immediately.**
10. **Nominated Supervisor checks all educators, staff and visitors are present, advises emergency services immediately if anyone is missing, and follows their advice.**
11. **Educators and staff supervise and reassure children, apply first aid if required, follow emergency services' instructions, contact parents/guardians, and ensure no one leaves until the all-clear is given.**

Emergency Shelter-in-Place Procedure — Bushfire and Grassfire

Shelter in place as a last resort until the fire has passed or a more suitable alternative is available.

12. **Nominated Supervisor sounds the alarm or agreed warning if safe, and calls 000 advising the nature of the emergency.**
13. **Nominated Supervisor and educators move all children, employees and visitors to the shelter-in-place location, assisting those who cannot walk.**
14. **If safe, move hoses inside, block drainpipes and fill gutters with water, close all doors and windows, soak towels under external doors, turn off gas supplies, and move furniture away from windows.**
15. **Nominated Supervisor collects attendance sheets, visitor register and Emergency Kit.**
16. **Educators check all children are present and report absences as soon as safe.**
17. **Nominated Supervisor checks all staff, children and visitors are present and advises emergency services immediately if anyone is missing.**
18. **If safe, the Nominated Supervisor checks the roof space every 10–20 minutes for embers and patrols for spot fires.**
19. **Educators supervise and reassure children, support anyone injured, follow emergency services' instructions, and the Nominated Supervisor contacts parents and ensures no one leaves until the all-clear.**

After Fire Evacuation or Shelter in Place

20. **Ensure injured children or adults receive medical attention if required.**
21. **Contact parents/guardians to collect children if required, advising of any relevant information (e.g. building damage, evacuation point, areas to avoid).**
22. **Ensure educators stay on duty to care for and supervise children until families or relief staff arrive.**
23. **Where parents/guardians cannot be contacted, contact them and authorised nominees every 15 minutes, ensure enough staff are available, ensure no child is left alone with an unknown adult, and contact police or Child Protection Services for advice if staff can no longer remain with the child.**
24. **Following shelter in place, move hoses outside and check premises and surrounds regularly for 2–4 hours.**



25. **Complete an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record for any child who suffered injury or trauma; obtain the parent/guardian signature and provide a copy; file the original and record summary details in the Register.**
26. **Notify the Regulator of any serious incident within 24 hours through NQS ITS and record details in the Serious Incident Register.**
27. **If the service closes, report the closure and reason within 24 hours to the relevant authorities, and advise them when the service reopens.**
28. **Notify the Work Health and Safety Authority as soon as possible about work-related incidents involving death, serious injury or illness, or a dangerous near-miss, and file the notification in the WHS Register.**
29. **Debrief after the emergency, review the plan, response and roles, implement improvements, record them in the QIP, and arrange for used fire equipment to be checked/replaced and a safety inspection if necessary.**

Related Policies

- Bush Play Policy
- Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Physical Environment and Safety Policy

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Law
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- NSW Rural Fire Service (rfs.nsw.gov.au)
- The Australian Fire Danger Rating System

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. The review will be conducted by management, employees, families and interested parties.

Last reviewed: 1 June 2023

Date for next review: June 2026