

SOUTH KINGSVILLE  
Pre SCHOOL

2021

# BUSH KINDER HANDBOOK



SOUTH KINGSVILLE PRESCHOOL

## BUSH KINDER OVERVIEW

Bush Kinder was developed in response to research that shows outdoor activities in a natural environment are extremely beneficial to children's health, wellbeing and development.

Bush kinder is an educational program that is set outdoors, so children can connect with nature through play and exploration. (Niki Buchan [www.naturallearning.net.au](http://www.naturallearning.net.au))

Key features of the Bush Kinder approach include:

- Children spend long and regular periods of time in unstructured or semi-structured play in natural environments all year round
- Children experience the daily and seasonal fluctuations in weather and seasons
- No toys, tools or art supplies, the Bush Kinder experience enables children to play with whatever nature has provided, and leaving only a footprint behind

Current research on children who regularly play in outdoor natural settings has concluded that they have:

- Increased confidence, motivation, concentration and resilience
- Increased social, physical and language skills
- Deeper conceptual understanding and respect for the natural environment
- Mud, sand, water, leaves, sticks etc. can stimulate children's immune systems making them sick less often
- Children are more physically active and more likely to be a healthy weight
- Children are more resistant to stress, have lower incidence of behavioural disorders, anxiety and depression, and have a higher measure of self-worth
- Bush Kinder deepens children's understanding of community and where they fit in and offers better opportunities for children to be present and authentically engaged in real life
- Encourages a well-connected, cohesive community that is environmentally aware

References:

<http://www.wgkg.vic.edu.au/bush-kinder>

<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/australasian-journal-early-childhood/index>

All Bush Kinder policies and the Benefit Risk Assessments can be viewed on our website:

<http://www.skps.vic.edu.au>

## CONSENT

Parents/carers must complete the Bush Kinder consent area in the Electronic Enrolment form sent out with your welcome letter, in the year prior to attendance.

## LOCATION – NEWPORT LAKES RESERVE

Bush Kinder will be located in Newport lakes Reserve. It will be held in the Arboretum area and the remainder of the Reserve will also be utilised for exploration. Please refer to map in Attachment 1.

## COMMUNICATION

Whilst a Bush Kinder session is running, parents/guardians must always have a mobile phone turned on and with them so that they are easily contactable and are able to be aware of any updates throughout the session.

Please add relevant details to your phone:

Kinder Mobile phone number: **0411 500 389**

Email address: [kinder@skps.vic.edu.au](mailto:kinder@skps.vic.edu.au)

Elissa Stafford: (Kookaburra Group) [Elissa@skps.vic.edu.au](mailto:Elissa@skps.vic.edu.au)

Tara Usher: (Rosella Group) [Tara@skps.vic.edu.au](mailto:Tara@skps.vic.edu.au)

## BUSH KINDER TIMES

Both 4 year old preschool groups (Kookaburras and Rosellas) will participate in a Bush Kinder session once per week on a Monday or Friday. Bush kinder will run in terms 2 and 3.

The allocated times for Bush kinder are as follows:

Kookaburra Group: Monday: 8:15am – 1.15pm

Rosella Group: Friday: 8.15am – 1.15pm.

Each session may vary in the length of time they stay at Newport Lakes Reserve.

## SESSION OVERVIEW

Prior to the commencement of each session, teachers will assess the Bush Kinder Site for safety and areas of potential interest. Children arrive from 8.15am, they must be signed in, put wet weather gear on (if necessary) and are then free to engage in play within the boundaries of the Bush Kinder Site. During the session the children will wash hands and come to sit together to chat, eat a snack and have a drink. At the conclusion of the session the children will be reminded to visit the toilet and collect their belongings in preparation for the walk back to kinder. The staff and children will walk back to South Kingsville Preschool leisurely as a group.

## DROP OFF PROCEDURE

The drop off and pick up location is the Arboretum. You can enter through the Mason Street/ Lakes Drive entrance or Bruce/Percy Street gates. Please refer to the map in Attachment 1. Bush kinder signage will be displayed.

Parents need to ensure they:

- Arrive no earlier than 8.15am as the site will not be ready.
- Support children to place their bag with change of clothes on or under tarp depending on the weather
- Assist children to put on wet weather gear.
- Place ID Band on child's wrist.
- Sign the child in using the attendance book and record the time of arrival.

To ensure children are given freedom to play and engage with nature we ask that adults are respectful of their space at all times. During drop off times if you have sibling's present please ensure that you are aware of where your child is at all times to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

At the conclusion of the session the children will walk back to South Kingsville Preschool

## STAFF

All staff hold early childhood qualifications and are experienced educators. Three staff will attend each Bush Kinder sessions and a parent/guardian: Child Ratios have been set at 1:8.

## VOLUNTEERS

We will also require **one parent helper** to attend each Bush Kinder session. This will allow us to achieve an adult to child ratio of 1:8. At times, extra helpers may be required for the safe running of the program. Teachers will ask for parent volunteers to roster themselves to days that suit best. Please note that with a class of 30, parents will only be required to volunteer for approx. 1 session per year.

At Bush Kinder all parent helpers and other volunteers are required to sign in and out via our attendance book and must be clearly identified by wearing the Bush Kinder identification badges, allowing them to be easily identified by children and park users.

Volunteers remain under the direct supervision of the teachers at all times throughout the session. Volunteers are requested not to use their mobile phones whilst assisting at Bush Kinder. Volunteers cannot have other children with them.

## FOOTPRINTS

Please always take away with you what you brought in. Parents and children are asked not to bring toys along to Bush Kinder to better enable children to engage in the natural surrounds.

## ATTENDANCE

We ask that parents/guardians exercise their own judgement in assessing whether it is appropriate for their children to attend Bush Kinder. Children should not attend Bush Kinder if they are unwell, excessively tired, or if a parent/guardian is concerned about their well-being due to forecast weather conditions. This also applies to any preschool session. Please note that the session will be cancelled if the forecast weather conditions are deemed extreme as per the Bush Kinder Program: Extreme Weather Policy. Please see session cancellation details.

## SESSION CANCELLATIONS

Sessions may be cancelled ahead of time, at short notice or during a session, in the following circumstances:

Reasons for Cancellation	Notification	Contact Person
Staff Absence	SMS on morning of session: Kinder will be held at South Kingsville Preschool	Educator
Extreme Weather	SMS on morning of session: Kinder will be held at South Kingsville Preschool	Educator
Lack of parent volunteer	SMS on morning of session: Kinder will be held at South Kingsville Preschool	Educator

**Note:** If on arrival, the Bush Kinder is not set up on site, this means that the session has been cancelled. In any event where Bush Kinder is cancelled, kindergarten sessions will take place at South Kingsville Preschool as per normal.

## WEATHER

Weather information is obtained from the Bureau of Meteorology website:

<http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/forecasts/melbourne.shtml>

<http://www.bom.gov.au/forecasts/graphical/sectors/VIC.php>

As per the Bush Kinder Program: Extreme Weather Policy Bush Kinder Sessions will be cancelled where BOM forecasts:

WEATHER CONDITION	EXTREME WEATHER DETERMINANT CAUSING CANCELLATION
Forecast Temperature	Greater than 32 degrees Celsius. Note: there is no pre-set minimum temperature.  Total Fire Ban Days.  Thermals and clothing layers should be worn on very cold days (refer to Protective Clothing Policy)
Forecast wind speed	>35km per hour
Forecast electrical storm activity	Thunder storm / electrical storm forecast
Grounds flooded near or at Bush Kinder site	On inspection of the Bush Kinder site by educators, or alert from Hobsons Bay City Council Park Rangers.
BOM weather warnings of extreme storm conditions and excessive rainfall	On warning issued by the Bureau of Meteorology

## CLOTHING

Parents/Guardians are required to determine appropriate clothing based on the weather forecast, and appropriate for their child's Bush Kinder time. It is recommended that children wear clothes that:

- Allows them to move freely and undertake activities such as climbing, balancing and running
- Keeps them warm in winter and cool on warmer days
- Loose light fitted long sleeve tops and pants are recommended in all weather conditions.
- Protects them from the damaging effects of the sun and from bites, scratches and stings
- Footwear that is enclosed, flexible and safe to climb/run in

**South Kingsville Preschool will issue:**

South Kingsville Preschool legionnaire hats in accordance with our Sun Protection Policy.

Waterproof clothing: Light rainproof jacket with a hood and pants, which zip up over clothing.

<b>Weather Conditions</b>	<b>Warm/Hot weather</b>	<b>Cold/Wet weather</b>
<b>Recommended clothing and footwear</b>	Light, loose fitting long sleeved top and long pants. Broad brimmed hat or Legionnaires hat. Closed toe shoes. T-shirts are also acceptable if sunscreen has been applied to arms	Waterproof jacket raincoat, long pants, long sleeved top, beanie, waterproof gloves, warm socks and gumboots. Thermals are recommended in very cold weather.
<b>Not recommended</b>	Short sleeved tops, long skirts or dresses and shorts	Skirts and dresses – so as to enable waterproofs to be worn over clothing
<b>Unacceptable</b>	Open toe shoes, sandals, thongs, crocs and singlet tops.	Non-waterproof outer clothing

## WHAT TO PACK

All children participating in Bush Kinder are required to bring a full change of clothes in their backpack. Spare clothing should include:

- Spare top and bottoms
- Spare underpants (and singlet in winter)
- 1 pairs of socks
- A spare pair of shoes if gumboots not likely to be worn all session (it is not recommended that gumboots are worn during times when the weather is dry due to the restrictions they impose
- **On high UV days please ensure you apply sunscreen prior to the beginning of a session.**

Other things to pack in your child's backpack include:

- Named water bottle with fresh water. There will be access to drinking water to supplement this when required on site.
- Food: Parents/carers are required to provide a snack and their lunch in a sealed container for each session for their child to eat. We ask you to consider the environment by not including any packaging. We also ask that you continue to follow the centre's Healthy Eating Policy when selecting their food.

## **TOILETS**

A camp toilet is provided for children and staff to use which is housed in an appropriate tent with antibacterial hand wash available. Parents are requested to encourage children to use the toilet at home prior to their session.

## **MEDICATIONS**

Parents and carers of children with anaphylaxis, asthma, or any other medical condition must ensure they discuss their emergency plans with staff prior to commencing kinder and Bush Kinder sessions. Children's medications and action plan will be stored with an educator at all times.

## **SAFETY AND AWARENESS**

Bush Kinder is conducted as part of the South Kingsville Preschool four year old program. It is therefore governed by the regulations and procedures of the Preschool. Due to location and environmental factors, additional policies have been identified and specific procedures created for the Bush Kinder program to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, staff and volunteers involved in the program. We ask parents to read through the policies regarding Bush Kinder (available on our website and a hard copy available at the preschool) to ensure they understand the responsibilities of the South Kingsville Preschool, staff, volunteers and parents alike.

Bush Kinder Program Specific Policies include:

- Bush Kinder Delivery and Collection of Children.
- Bush Kinder Emergency Evacuation.
- Bush Kinder Extreme Weather.
- Bush Kinder Play Benefit and Risk.
- Bush Kinder Protective Clothing.
- Bush Kinder Snake Awareness and First Aid.
- Bush Kinder Dog Awareness.

A Benefit and Risk Assessment has been prepared and is available on our website or at the Preschool. Risk assessment, including benefit analysis, is an ongoing and continual part of the program.

Evaluation of the Bush Kinder program will be constant and ongoing. We ask all participating families of the South Kingsville Preschool Bush Kinder be actively involved in this process. Parent/guardians are encouraged to provide feedback, raise concerns and highlight any areas of improvement at any time.

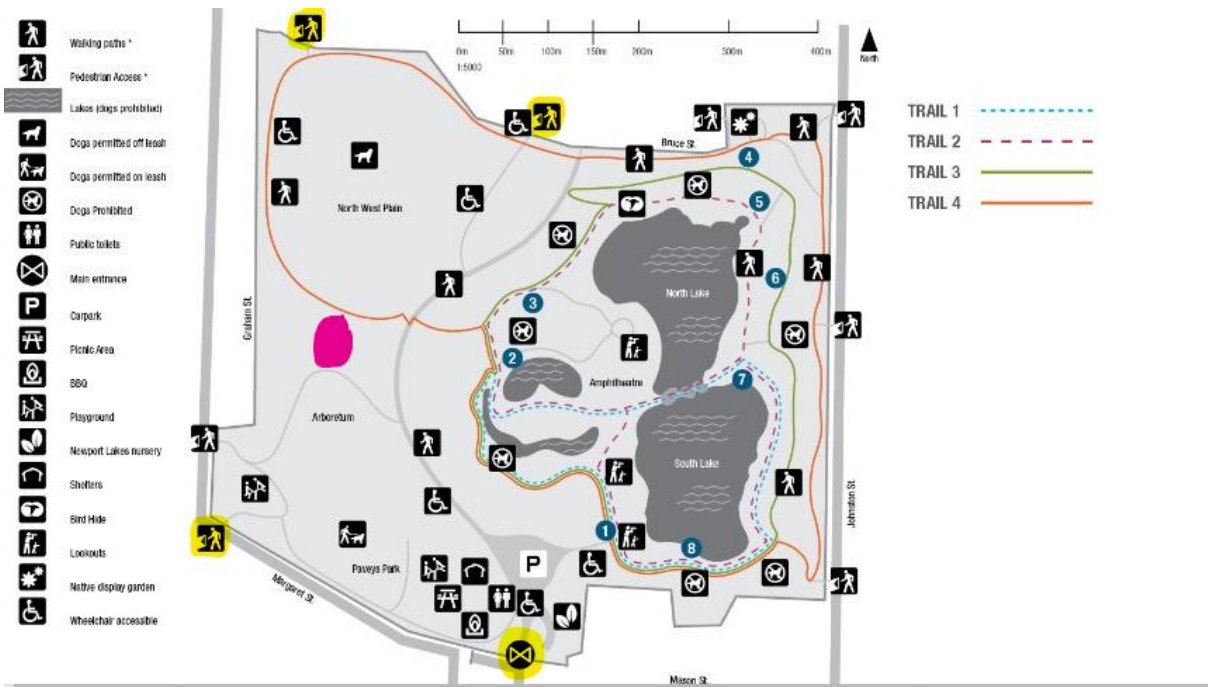
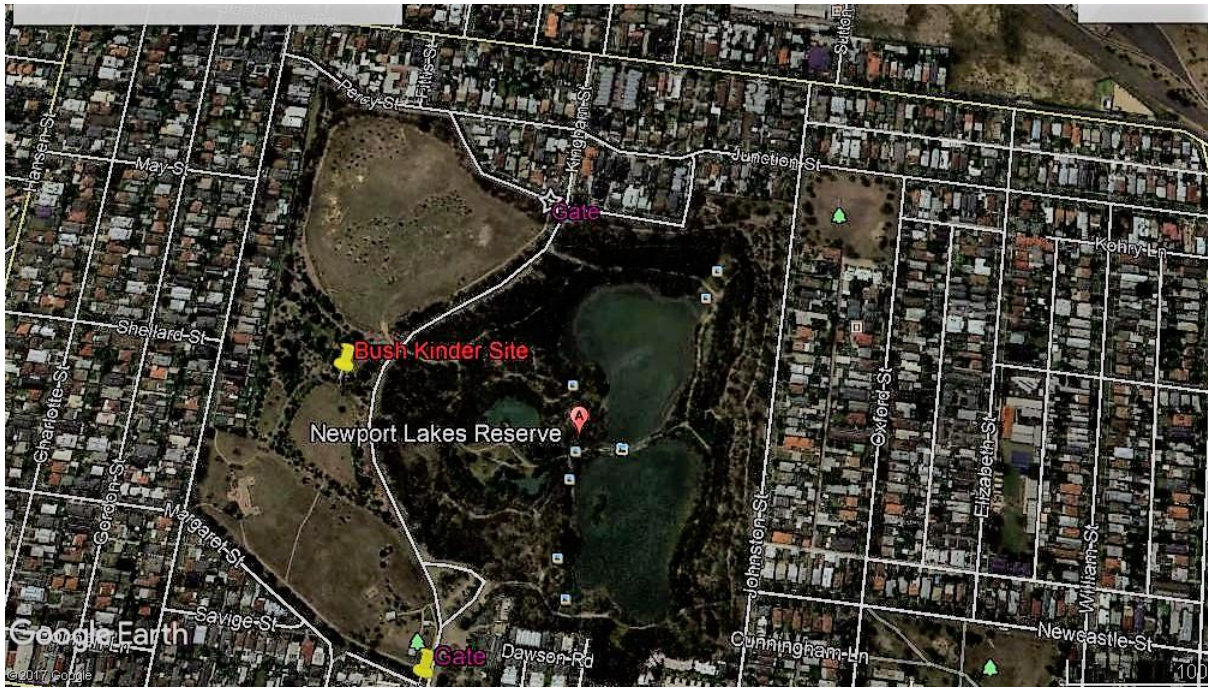
## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

Should an emergency situation arrive, Bush Kinder participants may be required to evacuate to a safer location to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the group. In this event, Bush Kinder educators will follow the procedures set out in the Bush Kinder Program: Emergency Evacuation Policy to move the children to designated safe areas and assembly points as detailed in the emergency evacuation maps.



# ATTACHMENT 1

## BUSH KINDER MAPS



**ENTRANCE GATES**



**BUSH KINDER SITE**