

BEACONSFIELD KINDERGARTEN INC.

BUSH KINDER POLICY

Best Practice

PURPOSE

This policy will clearly define the processes and procedures for Beaconsfield Kindergarten's Bush Kinder Program, including:

- delivery and collection of children
- emergency evacuation
- dog awareness
- snake awareness
- protective clothing
- visibility of children
- extreme weather
- communication between staff and parents
- respect for the environment.

This policy is a special circumstance policy which augments and should be read in conjunction with the other Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc. policies.

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc. is committed to:

- providing a Bush Kinder program that allows children to learn, play and develop in a natural outdoor environment
- ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children attending the Bush Kinder program
- being respectful of the Bush Kinder space
- facilitating open communication between families and staff to ensure the Bush Kinder program operates effectively.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisors, Persons in day-to-day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the Bush Kinder program and activities of Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc.

RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Families	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Ensuring that all staff, and parents/guardians with children participating in the Bush Kinder program are familiar with their responsibilities under this policy and other related service policies	R	√	√	√	
Ensuring that all staff participating in the Bush Kinder program have received appropriate training in areas such as (but not limited to) first aid, snake awareness, dog awareness, appropriate management of onlookers	√	√	√		
Ensuring that adult to child ratios are appropriate to allow for safe running of the Bush Kinder program	R	R	√		
Ensuring that a fully-equipped first aid kit is taken to the Bush Kinder location	R	R	√		
Ensuring that a risk assessment for each site is conducted prior to the Bush Kinder program commencing each year	R	R	√		
Ensuring that the Bush Kinder site is safe at the beginning of each session, and noting any additional risks on the risk assessment	R	R	R		
Ensuring that an educational program is planned for each Bush Kinder session	R	R	R		
Ensuring that all children participating in the Bush Kinder program have a signed a permission form prior to participating in the Bush Kinder program	R	R	√	√	
Following appropriate first aid procedures in the event of a first aid incident during the Bush Kinder program	R	R	R		
Ensuring that a sign advising that a Bush Kinder session is in progress is on display during each Bush Kinder session			√		
Ensuring the safety of all children and other staff attending the Bush Kinder program by following the procedures outlined in this policy and its attachments	R	R	R	R	
Checking the weather forecast the night before and on the morning of a Bush Kinder session, including the SunSmart app for UV levels			√	√	
Notifying families if a Bush Kinder session is to be cancelled			√		
Supplying protective clothing as outlined in this policy	√	√	√		
Ensuring that all children are dressed appropriately for the Bush Kinder session			√	√	

Raising any concerns about the Bush Kinder program with their child's teacher, the Centre Manager or the Committee of Management.				√	
Providing all parents/guardians of children participating in the Bush Kinder program a copy of this policy	√	√	√		

PROCEDURES AND INFORMATION

The information below forms the policies and procedures of Beaconsfield Kindergarten's Bush Kinder program. The service's other policies (including those listed above) should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Cancellation

If Bush Kinder is cancelled (for example, due to extreme weather), the kinder session will be held at Beaconsfield Kindergarten (O'Neil Rd or Woods St campus as appropriate). Normal session times will apply.

In the event of a Bush Kinder session being cancelled, families will be notified by text message no later than 7:00am on the morning of the session. If you arrive at the Bush Kinder location and no staff are present, this means that Bush Kinder has been cancelled. Please take your child to Beaconsfield Kindergarten for their session.

Clothing

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children are dressed appropriately for Bush Kinder and for the forecast weather. Appropriate clothing includes sturdy shoes (no thongs or sandals), long pants and long sleeves. Skirts and dresses are not recommended and may be deemed unsuitable. Gumboots are also not recommended as children will be climbing and running. If you would like your child to wear gumboots, please pack them as separate footwear.

In addition, clothing should:

- allow children to move freely and undertake activities such as climbing, balancing and running
- keep children warm/cool according to the weather
- protect children from the sun.

Children will be unable to participate in Bush Kinder if they arrive at the session in inappropriate clothing and without suitable clothing to change into.

Spare clothing: All children are required to bring a change of clothes, including underwear in case of a toileting accident. Parents/carers are advised to bring a complete change of clothes when they pick their children up after Bush Kinder, in case children are wet or muddy.

Protective clothing: Beaconsfield Kindergarten will loan each child participating in the Bush Kinder Program suitable waterproof clothing. This clothing will remain the property of Beaconsfield Kindergarten but will stay with the child for the duration of the Bush Kinder program. Families are required to pay a \$50 deposit on the clothing, which will be refunded on return of the clothing in good condition (allowing for normal wear and tear) at the end of the Bush Kinder program. If there is any damage to the wet weather gear during or outside of a session, please let staff know as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that the waterproof clothing is cared for appropriately according to the manufacturer's instructions.

All children should arrive at Bush Kinder wearing the protective clothing supplied by the kindergarten.

Communication

Parents/guardians of all children participating in the Bush Kinder program must ensure that they have provided an appropriate mobile phone number that staff can communicate with both before and during Bush Kinder sessions. This is the primary method we will use to communicate with families if there are any changes to the Bush Kinder program (for example, cancellation due to extreme weather).

Teachers will complete reflections on bush kinder sessions in the same way that they do for sessions held at kindergarten. These will be shared on Storypark.

Dog Awareness

Children may come into contact with dogs at any of the Bush Kinder locations. All children will participate in an appropriate pet/dog education session, and Beaconsfield Kindergarten educators will practise safe behaviour with dogs prior to Bush Kinder sessions commencing. Particular attention will be given to recognising warning signs given by dogs, the correct way to approach a dog and what to do if approached by an aggressive dog. Staff will be trained in appropriate procedures and first aid in the event of a dog attack.

Specific procedures to be followed if an aggressive dog approaches the children:

- Remind children to stand still, keep eyes down, put arms by sides with hands in fists and thumbs on the inside and not touch the dog.
- Encourage children to remain calm and not run away from the dog.
- Locate the owner if possible and encourage the owner to take the dog away from the Bush Kinder site.

Drop off/pick up

Unless advised otherwise by staff, the following drop off and pick up points will be used.

Akoonah Park/Cardinia St Nature Reserve	Enter via 5 (off Cardinia St) and meet at the designated point near the Jack Rae Pavilion (see attached map).
Bob Burgess Reserve	Meet at the Bush Kinder site in the north-western section of the reserve.
Wilson Botanic Park	Meeting point in front of Visitor Information Centre (see attached map).

At all locations:

- children must be signed in and out, with the exact time of arrival/departure recorded.
- parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that children have their Bush Kinder protective clothing, a backpack with a change of clothes, water bottle and food.
- parents/guardians are responsible for the supervision of their children before they are signed in, after they are signed out, and for the supervision of any siblings.

Emergency Evacuation/Relocation

In the event that an emergency, incident or situation occurs that necessitates evacuation of the Bush Kinder site, staff will follow the procedures below.

- Keep children calm.
- Ensure sign-in sheet, first aid kit and any medication are in the teacher's backpack.
- Count children against the sign in sheet to ensure all children are accounted for.
- With the exception of the teacher's backpack, leave all other Bush Kinder gear at the site unless the teacher deems that it is safe and appropriate to collect.
- Calmly walk children to the evacuation/relocation point in pairs, keeping close together.
- Position an adult at the front and end of the group, as well as interspersed amongst the group as appropriate.
- Notify emergency services if required.
- On arrival at the evacuation/relocation point, count children against the sign in sheet again to ensure that all children are accounted for.
- Notify Beaconsfield Kindergarten office of the situation. Office staff will notify the Department of Education if necessary.
- Notify parents via text message of the new location for collection (if required).
- If the evacuation/relocation is due to weather conditions, wait for the extreme weather to pass. When it does, normal activities may be resumed if it is safe and appropriate to do so. The same relocation procedures should be followed to return to the Bush Kinder site.

First Aid

All Beaconsfield Kindergarten staff are trained in first aid (including CPR), and asthma and anaphylaxis management. Staff will carry a portable first aid kit with them at all times while at the Bush Kinder location.

Identification of Children

Beaconsfield Kindergarten will provide high-visibility vests for all children to wear during the Bush Kinder program (note that these will not need to be worn if the child is wearing the protective clothing provided by the kindergarten).

Location

Beaconsfield Kindergarten will utilise a number of Bush Kinder sites, which may include Akoonah Park/Cardinia St Nature Reserve, Bob Burgess Reserve and Wilson Botanic Park. Maps of each site are provided in the appendices. Your teacher will advise which Bush Kinder location/s are to be used by your child's group.

Medication

Parents/guardians of children with asthma, anaphylaxis, allergies or other medical needs should discuss their child's action plan with staff prior to the first Bush Kinder session. Each child's personal medication will be kept by staff during Bush Kinder sessions.

Parent Helpers

We would appreciate parent/guardian/family helpers for each Bush Kinder session. In line with Beaconsfield Kindergarten's *Excursions and Service Events Policy*, all helpers will be required to have a valid Working with Children Check.

All helpers remain under direct supervision of the Early Childhood Teacher at all times.

Parent helpers are reminded that photographs should not be taken of children participating in the bush kinder program.

Permission Form

All parents/guardians must complete and sign a Bush Kinder Permission Form prior to their child commencing the Bush Kinder program. This form must be returned to the kindergarten prior to the beginning of Term 2, or the child will be unable to participate in the Bush Kinder program.

Toilets

Children will have access to permanent or portable toilets at all of our Bush Kinder sites; however, we encourage children to use the toilet prior to the session beginning. Only Beaconsfield Kindergarten staff or the child's own parent/guardian will be permitted to take children to the toilet during a Bush Kinder session.

Snake Awareness

Snakes are known to inhabit all of the Beaconsfield Kindergarten Bush Kinder sites. Snakes are most prevalent during warmer months, and are less likely to be encountered during the months that the Bush Kinder program is run (Terms 2 and 3). Children attending Bush Kinder will be taught snake awareness practises such as:

- wear appropriate clothing, including covered shoes.
- never put hands inside a hollow log or thick grass without looking first.
- if you see a snake, back away from it slowly. Do not touch it, and inform an educator.

Staff are trained in appropriate first aid procedures for snake bites, and will carry a 'snake bite first aid kit' at all times.

Sunscreen

On days when the UV index is forecast to be 3 or above, please apply sunscreen to your child prior to the Bush Kinder session commencing.

Training

All staff who are employed to participate in the Bush Kinder program will be given annual training in areas such as:

- emergency evacuation procedures specific to each site
- dog awareness
- snake awareness
- first aid
- other Bush Kinder procedures as appropriate.

Water Safety

All of the Beaconsfield Kindergarten Bush Kinder locations contain bodies of water. Staff will educate children about water safety prior to commencing Bush Kinder, and will ensure that supervision strategies are adjusted appropriately when children are playing near water.

Weather

Bush Kinder is intended to run during a broad spectrum of weather conditions, including rain. However, Bush Kinder sessions may be cancelled in the event of extreme weather forecast, as detailed below.

- Temperature: If the temperature is forecast to be above 35 degrees Celsius, or below 5 degrees Celsius.
- Wind: If the wind speed is forecast to be in excess of 50 km per hour (moderate gale), and the kindergarten teacher determines that there is a significant risk associated with strong wind at the Bush Kinder location.
- Storm: If there is an electrical storm forecast.
- Other: Any weather warning issued by the Bureau of Meteorology will be considered by the kindergarten teacher to determine its likely impact on the Bush Kinder location.

What to bring

Bag: Each child will need a **LARGE** backpack that can easily fit lunch/snack, spare clothes and shoes.

Clothes: Each child should bring a change of clothes, including underwear (please see 'clothing' above). It is not recommended that gumboots be worn all the time due to the restriction in movement they impose; however, they may be appropriate at times and may be a suitable 'spare' pair of shoes. Please keep in mind that children are required to carry any spare clothing and/or shoes in their bag.

Food: Each child is to bring appropriate food as instructed by their teacher. Generally, the food required will be the same as that which is suggested for similar-length sessions on non-Bush Kinder days. Please keep packaging to a minimum, in consideration of the environment.

Water: Each child should bring a named drink bottle filled with fresh drinking water.

Protective clothing: as provided by Beaconsfield Kindergarten.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Beaconsfield Kindergarten's Bush Kinder program will operate in local parklands which are also accessible by members of the public.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), as amended 2012
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *National Quality Standards*

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Service policies

- *Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy*
 - *Administration of First Aid Policy*
 - *Administration of Medication Policy*
 - *Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions Policy*
 - *Asthma Policy*
 - *Child Safe Environment Policy*
 - *Delivery and Collection of Children Policy*
 - *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*
 - *Environmental Sustainability Policy*
 - *Excursions and Service Events Policy*
 - *Hygiene Policy*
 - *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
 - *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
 - *Interactions with Children Policy*
 - *Nutrition, Active Play & Oral Health Policy*
 - *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
 - *Relaxation and Sleep Policy*
 - *Road Safety & Safe Transport Policy*
 - *Sun Protection Policy*
 - *Supervision of Children Policy*
 - *Water Safety Policy.*
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EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures unless a lesser period is necessary because of a risk.

ATTACHMENTS

- Bush Kinder Permission Form template
- Looking after your Bush Kinder wet weather gear
- Site Map – Akoonah Park/Cardinia St Nature Reserve
- Site Map – Bob Burgess Reserve
- Site Map – Wilson Botanic Park

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc. on 18th March 2019.

REVIEW DATE: 03/04/2023

REVIEW FREQUENCY: 2 Years

NEXT REVIEW DUE: February 2025



Beaconsfield Kindergarten Bush Kinder Permission

Excursion details (parents to retain this section)

Date(s) of excursion	(If the excursion is a regular outing, provide a description of when the child is to be taken on the regular outings)				
Excursion destination & address					
Departure and arrival times					
Reason/Proposed activities					
Method of transport		Requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints			
Cost		Risk assessment completed	Y / N	Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy Available	Y / N
No. of children attending		Child/educator/adult ratio			
Name of excursion co-ordinator & phone contact					
Children will need to bring					



Permission Form – please complete this section & return by _____

Emergency Information		
Any allergies? Yes / No If yes, please detail:	Any medical conditions? Yes / No If yes, please detail:	
Doctor's Name:	Doctor's Phone Number:	
Parents' Contact Information		
Parent/Guardian 1 Mobile Number:	Parent/Guardian 2 Mobile Number:	Home Number:
Other contact numbers for Bush Kinder notifications		
Name: Mobile:	Name: Mobile:	Name: Mobile:

I _____ parent/guardian of _____ give permission for my child to attend the excursion to **Bush Kinder** as detailed in this information letter. I agree that he/she will be subject to the care of the persons conducting the excursion. I expect my child to follow all rules governing safety and behaviour while participating in this excursion. In the event of illness or accident to my child I will be notified as soon as possible. I authorise the person in charge of the excursion, where it is impractical to communicate with me, to consent to my child receiving medical treatment (including the administration of anaesthetic) as may be deemed necessary by a legally qualified medical practitioner. I agree to pay any expenses incurred including transportation and hospital accommodation. I understand that all reasonable care for the safety and health of my child will be taken by the person in charge of this excursion.

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

I have read and accept the risk assessment form for the excursion as outlined above.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

I would like to attend the excursion as a helper: yes no

Working with Children Check Number (if attending as a helper): _____ Exp. Date: _____



Looking after your Bush Kinder wet weather gear

A set of wet weather gear (jacket and pants) will be loaned to each child undertaking the Bush Kinder program. We ask that you pay a \$50 deposit, which will be refunded at the end of the Bush Kinder program when the clothing is returned in good condition (allowing for reasonable wear).

Please ensure that you follow the manufacturer's care instructions below. Failure to do so may result in forfeiting your deposit if we need to replace the clothing due to incorrect care or washing. If you do not have the correct washing detergent, please use **WATER ONLY** when washing your child's clothing.

When returning clothing at the end of the Bush Kinder program, please ensure that all pockets have been emptied and that zips and buttons are closed.



Product info & care

Fabric

The muddlarks® range is made from a soft yet hardwearing breathable 150gsm Nylon - waterproof to 10,000mm+. The durable Nylon fabric has a fine breathable Polyurethane (PU) coating on the inside which prevents water penetrating the fabric. The fabric has also been Teflon® proofed on the outside of the garment which helps resist staining and acts as a Durable Water Repellent (DWR). This ensures that the water droplets 'bead' and run off the surface of the garment before getting a chance to soak in. The fabric has been independently tested to insure top performance in outdoor wear.

Washing Instructions

- Close all fasteners such as zippers and snaps present on your garment. This helps to protect the fine PU coating on the inside of the garment.
- Use a soft brush to remove any excess mud from the outside of the garment before beginning the wash cycle.
- Avoid use of detergents, biological washing powders and fabric conditioners/softeners as these will leave a residue that affects the breathability of your garment and will help to de-activate the DWR finish. Also do not use commercial stain removers or bleach as they will degrade your garment.
- It is advised that you use a specialised performance wash such as Granger's or Nikwax Tech Wash available from most outdoor stores or pure soap flakes available from most supermarkets when washing your garment.
- Machine wash - Ensure there are no traces of detergent in the machine by running a rinse cycle before you start. Wash on a delicate or synthetic wash with a gentle spin – maximum temperature 30°C (cool wash).
- Hand wash - Immerse the garment in a sink with cool water. Using a specialized performance wash or pure soap, gently agitate the water. Rinse in clean water 3 times, or until run-off is clear. Do not wring or squeeze your garment.
- Hang your garment to dip dry away from direct sunlight, as the sun's ultraviolet (UV) light weakens treated fabrics.
- Do not tumble dry or iron your garment as heat can damage the garments waterproofing.

Reproofing

The Durable Water Repellent (DWR) finish applied to the face of the fabric helps make the fabric water-resistant by preventing the garment from becoming saturated with water. This saturation, called 'wetting out,' can reduce the garment's breathability and cause the fine PU coating on the inside of the fabric to swell, becoming weak and vulnerable to damage.

The DWR will wear off over time and this will happen faster with washing. If water splashed onto the garment no longer beads and runs off, then we recommended re-treatment to help extend the life of the garment and enhance its technical performance.

Please note that the DWR can also be affected by dirt and oils, which soon coat the DWR layer, hindering the performance. Shake and/or wipe the affected areas with a damp cloth first to remove dirt and/or oils and only wash as a last resort.

If a subsequent treatment is necessary to re-proof the fabric then wash your garment as directed on the care label before using a spray-on waterproofing treatment such as Granger's Waterproofer or Nikwax Proof Spray-On available online or from many outdoor stores. Follow the instruction on the bottle carefully. You may repeat this re-proofing process as many times as needed.

Care

Take special care to keep your muddlarks® garment out of harm's way. Solvents, insecticides such as bug spray, and alcohol based products such as hair spray and spray sunscreen will destroy the PU coating, seam tape and will remove the DWR finish.

Do not store your muddlarks® garment wet or even slightly damp as this may result in the development of mould and mildew which will weaken both the seams and fabric. Store your muddlarks® garment away from direct sunlight in a well aired place.

Thank You



Akoonah Park/Cardinia St Nature Reserve – site map



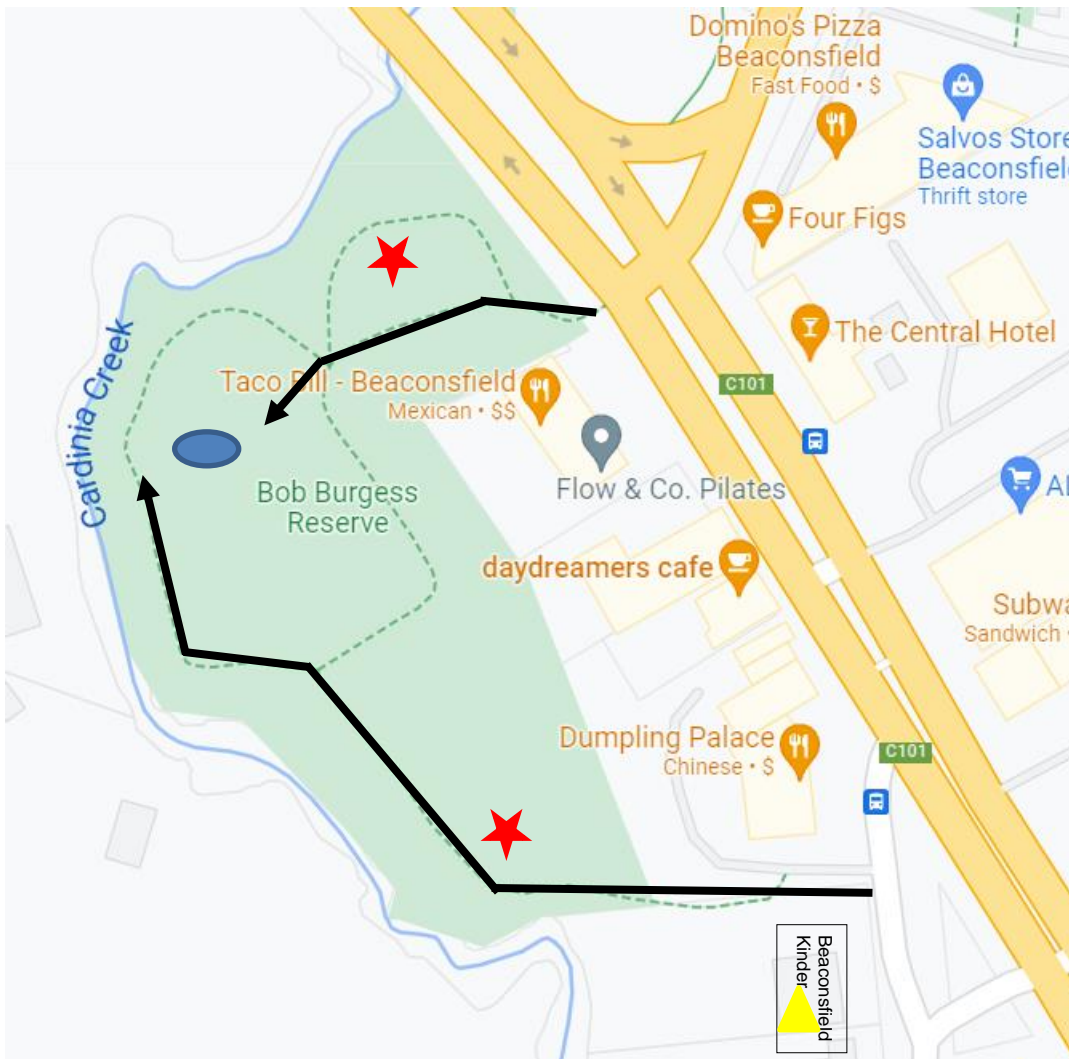
■ Drop off and pick up point





★ Emergency assembly points

➔ Enter via Gate 5, off Cardinia St

▲ Extreme weather shelter points

Bob Burgess Reserve site map



-  Bush Kinder location
-  Route to Bush Kinder location
-  Emergency assembly points
-  In the case of extreme weather, children will return to kindergarten

Wilson Botanic Park site map



- Visitors Centre – Drop off and pick up point
- Emergency assembly points
- Extreme weather shelter points
- Approximate Bush Kinder locations (children will walk here with staff)