



A 'typical' day at Red Group's Bush Kinder....

Each session will begin at Cheltenham Park on Wednesdays at 8:30am. Note the bush kinder sessions are only offered in the Red Group.

The children will engage in a discussion about the day ahead including what to expect at Bush Kinder, what they are looking forward to as well as a reminder about staying safe. This will include aspects of road safety as well as the importance of staying within the designated boundary when onsite at Bush Kinder.

Once all the children and any helpers have arrived we will help the children put on a OAK fluoro vest which displays the OAK logo and phone number. By 8.45am we will then walk up the track to our designated location at the park, which is very close to the 1st 3rd Cheltenham Scout Hall. Note that if you are running late you will have to meet us near the scout hall. On arrival the children will be reminded of the boundary and given the opportunity to play, discover, explore, investigate, connect, and have fun.

After a 'reasonable' amount of time the children will be asked to gather as a group, wash hands, sit, chat, and have a snack together.

They will then have a short amount of time to re-engage and play before walking back to kinder. We will walk along Park Road and down Olympic Avenue.

The Value of Bush Kinder

Bush Kinder is strongly linked to the philosophy and pedagogy of Olympic Avenue Kindergarten.

The EYLF invites educators to consider the outdoors as a space where children can engage in rich play that offers "open ended interactions, spontaneity, risk taking, exploration discovery and connect with nature." It is without a doubt Bush Kinder provides this!

"We are prewired to explore and investigate" John Medina 'Play Rules'

"No other aspect of a child's life offers this degree of consistent but varied chances for critical thinking and problem solving" Kahn and Kellert 2002.

Support for outdoor learning has grown for many reasons including concerns about diminishing child health and lack of outdoor time. The Bush Kinder program aims to connect children with nature, through participation in nature-based experiences with selected resources to enhance children's outdoor learning.

Why is Bush Kinder beneficial to children's learning?

- Learning outdoors in natural spaces encourages children's active exploration and experimentation promoting cognitive development
- Research overwhelmingly concludes that over time, with continued opportunities for learning outdoors, children experience increased self-awareness, self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, empathy, social and communication skills, independence, positive mental attitude, self-esteem and confidence
- Children make discoveries that occur naturally in the environment - seeing puddles formed after rain, trees changing throughout seasons, gardens growing
- Exposure to literacy and numeracy experiences in the environment - for example, distances, heights, slopes, signs, conversations and observations
- Revisiting familiar open spaces week after week encourages children to learn, discover and take safe risks
- Increases awareness of the existence of the broader community, and the people and places in it

Frequently Asked Questions About Bush Kinder

What are the aims of Bush Kinder?

To develop:

- an appreciation and connection to nature
- self awareness
- self regulation
- intrinsic motivation
- empathy
- good communication skills
- independence
- a positive attitude, self esteem and confidence

We also aim to promote the holistic development of all children and offer the children an opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and themselves.

What skills will the children gain?

- Physical development ie running freely, climbing
- Social skills through healthy happy relationships with adults and children.
- Language development ie effective communication
- Imaginative play

- Learning about the natural environment
- Problem solving
- Gaining self esteem
- Developing resilience.

How do I know my child will be safe?

The children are only allowed to play within a designated boundary. Staff and parent helpers will be placed deliberately within different sections of the area and asked to supervise and observe the children. If a child leaves the boundary a whistle will be blown signalling to all children to freeze. Any children who have gone out of the boundary will be immediately brought back in. Note that parent helpers must have a working with children check.

How will the children know 'the boundary'?

At the beginning of each session the children will be reminded of the boundary as the one area the children are allowed to play and that it is important to stay within the boundary to stay safe. We will also use witches hats where necessary.

What happens if it rains or there is extreme weather conditions?

Bush Kinder is run in almost all weather conditions. Sessions will only be cancelled if strong wind warnings, extreme heat or an electrical storm are forecast.

How will we be notified if it is cancelled?

A decision relating to inclement weather will be made by 6:30pm the night before the Bush Kinder session and an Educa message will be posted to all families. If we don't go to bush kinder the children will be dropped off to kinder at Olympic Avenue instead.

What do I pack for a snack?

Your child's usual lunch box and their water bottle.

How many staff will there be?

One teacher and two co educators.

How will toileting be managed?

Public toilets are available near the car park at Cheltenham Park (parents are encouraged to take their child to use these prior to meeting the staff at 8.30am). We will have exclusive access to the bathrooms at the nearby Scout Hall. Children will be taken to the bathroom at the Scout Hall in groups and will be supervised at all times.

Can I contact the staff at Bush Kinder during the session?

Yes, the Olympic Avenue Kinder Pennydale mobile will be taken to each bush kinder session.

Can I be a parent helper at Bush Kinder?

Yes we need volunteers please! (must have valid working with children check)

What do I have to do if I am a parent helper?

In conjunction with the educators:

Consider the safety of the children, watch their play at all times to ensure safe behaviour

Support the educators by setting up/packing up etc

Ensure children are playing within the boundaries

Help to supervise children on the walk back to kinder

What to bring for Bush Kinder

- Lunch box
- Drink bottle filled with water

- Hat (from September to April)
- Waterproof coat
- Change of clothes, including socks

Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather; sun smart during the warmer weather (when the UV is going to reach 3) and warm in the cold weather. Sensible shoes are mandatory, all year round (sneakers are good, no sandals, crocs, thongs or open toed shoes please.)

On returning to kinder the children will continue to engage in the planned indoor and outdoor program until pick-up time of 4pm.

Bush Kinder Policies

Various policies have been created for bush kinder:

- Identification and visibility policy
- Snake and spider awareness policy
- Emergency and evacuation policy
- Extreme weather policy
- Protective clothing policy
- Dog awareness policy
- Delivery and collection of children policy

If you have any queries regarding the Bush Kinder program please feel free to ask the educators or email us on officeolympicave@gmail.com.