

Jacaranda Preschool Inc

Bush Kinder Program 2026

Parent Handbook



When I'm playing outside I'm learning

Absorption **Arranging** Adapting Action
Animals Autonomy Balance **Belonging**
Calculating Caring Change **Cause and Effect**
Chemical Reaction **Community** Classification
Creative thinking **Construction** Co-operation
Density **Communication** Creatures **Culture**
Connections **Confidence** Depth Conservation
Distance Evaporation Exploring **Force**
Experimenting Environment **Friction** Feelings
Friendship **Gravity** Height Identification
Inertia Insects Investigation **Initiative**
Independence **Invention** Light Listening
Language Manipulating Movement **Matching**
Measurement Mass **Myself** Negotiation Nature
Nurturing Number Observing **Ordering**
Patterning Physics **Planning** **Problem Solving**
Propulsion **Plants** Questioning Reaction
Risk Responsibility **Self Control** Size **Shape**
Speed Spatial **Representation** Suspension
Scent **Seasons** Scientific Method Touch
Temperature Team Work Texture **Vibration**
Volume Weight **Weather** and so much more!

Playing outside makes me

happier, healthier, smarter

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PARTICIPATION

To participate in this program parents/carers must complete and return the Bush Kinder Excursion Form, by the due date listed on the form.

Parents/carers should also provide any changes to their excursion and enrolment forms **including updating the list of authorised people to collect your child.**

Children participating in our Bush Kinder Program at Huskisson Reserve will be dropped off and collected from our kindergarten. Staff will be walking the children to and from the Bush Kinder Site within kindergarten hours, weather permitting.

COMMUNICATION

We ask parents to **always have their mobile phone with them and turned on** throughout the duration of their bush kinder session to be easily contactable when necessary and aware of any updates throughout the session.

Please enter relevant numbers to your phone:

Contacts for Bush Kinder in session – Kingsway Drive

Nominated Supervisor:	Joanne Argyropoulos	9465 1993
	Laura Bowen (Wombat group) Rose Pennacchia (Wombat Group) Helen Di Giuseppe (Wombat Group)	0422 124 694

Contacts for Jacaranda Pre-School

Jacaranda Preschool – Kingsway Drive Kindergarten:	jacaranda.lalor.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au 9465 1993
President:	Lisa Sirp jacaranda.lalor.president@kindergarten.vic.gov.au

Important information:

Website address:	www.jacarandakinder.com.au
Kinder mobile number:	0422 124 694 Wombat Group (Kingsway Drive)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

At Jacaranda Pre-School we believe childhood is precious and that an important part of childhood is being outside in nature.

We know in our hearts that children need more time outside in nature. This knowledge is supported by research.

Children are natural learners. Bush Kinder will provide your child with the time and an ideal environment for them to learn in 3 hours of uninterrupted play in the bush, using what nature has provided as learning materials.

Bush Kinder will be a special part of your child's total kinder experience.

They will have the opportunity to play in the rain, roll down grassy mounds, balance along fallen logs, get involved in dramatic play, find insects, draw with sticks in the ground, make mud pies. Each child's developmental progression, advancing skill levels and particular interests will be noted by their teachers. The teachers will use this knowledge to support the children's learning just as they do at kindergarten.

Teachers will support children as they take the risks and face challenges essential to well-rounded learning.

Stories will be told, knowledge will be shared, songs will be sung.

Through play your children will connect with and respect this space. They will connect with their land in a way that cannot be done under a roof or within walls.

SESSION OVERVIEW

Prior to the commencement of each session, teachers will scan the bush space for safety and new areas of potential interest.

Each Bush Kinder session will begin with the group meeting together with the teachers, and an Acknowledgement of Country will be said.

A group discussion may then take place, or a story told.

The children will then be free to engage in play within the boundaries of the Bush Kinder site.

STAFF

Your child's kindergarten teachers, both qualified educators with a passion for seeing our children learning in natural environments.

Three staff will be in attendance at all times. Staff ratios have been set at 1:11.



ATTENDANCE

When shouldn't my child attend?

We ask that parents/carers are diligent and 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 ill, excessively tired or if parents are concerned about their wellbeing due to forecast weather conditions.



SESSIONS

Session times:

Bush Kinder sessions will be running on Fridays terms 2,3 and 4 at Huskisson Reserve. This will be for 3 hours within their session time as decided by staff factoring in weather conditions.

Bush Kinder Session cancellation – Huskisson Bush Kinder Program

Bush Kinder sessions may be cancelled due to extreme weather or other circumstances. In this instance, a NORMAL KINDER SESSION will be held at kindergarten and parents will be notified when they collect their child from kindergarten.

WEATHER

Staff will look at the weather predictions of BOM website and will factor this into their risk assessment and decision-making process to determine if a Bush Kinder session should proceed.

This information will be 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>



CLOTHING

Parents are required to determine appropriate clothing based on the weather forecast appropriate to their session time.

Children will not be allowed to attend a Bush Kinder session if they arrive with inappropriate clothing and without suitable clothing to change into.

It is important that Bush Kinder participants wear appropriate and protective clothing and footwear which:

- allows children to move freely and undertake activities such as climbing, balancing, running
- keeps children warm and dry in cold/wet weather
- protects children from the damaging effects of the sun, UV rays in warm weather and high UV conditions.
- prevents sunburn, bites, scratches and stings. (Even in warm weather, long sleeve tops and long pants are recommended - this clothing should be loose fitting and light).
- Where possible is made from natural fabrics which allow the body to breathe and is comfortable against the skin
- In the case of footwear, it needs to keep feet and toes covered and have a flexible sole to allow children to climb and balance on uneven surfaces

The following table provides examples of recommended clothing, clothing which is not recommended and unacceptable clothing:

	Warm Weather	Cold Weather / Rain
Recommended clothing and footwear	Light loose fitting long sleeve tops and long pants, broad brimmed hat, closed toe shoes	Rain sets*, long pants, long sleeved top, beanie, waterproof gloves, thermals in very cold weather. Gumboots or waterproof hiking boots.
Not recommended	short sleeved tops, shorts, skirts or dresses.	Skirts, dresses (incompatible with Rain sets)
Unacceptable clothing and footwear	Open toe shoes, sandals, thongs, crocs, singlet tops	Non-waterproof outer clothing. (A rain set on top of non-waterproof clothing is recommended).

***Rain sets:** Light rainproof suit worn over clothing, which includes a jacket with a hood, and pants, which zip up over clothing. The centre will provide a rain set for each child to use.

Change of clothes: All children participating in Bush Kinder are required to bring a change of clothes and footwear as these may become wet and muddy. It is recommended that the spare clothing includes:

- Spare top and bottoms of appropriate thickness/weight for the weather on the day
- Spare underpants (and singlet in winter)
- 2 pairs of socks
- 1 pair of gumboots (it is not recommended that gumboots are worn at all times due to the restriction of movement they impose).

On high UV days, please ensure that you apply sunscreen prior to the session commencing. Sunscreen will be available for re-application during sessions.

Clothing provided by Kindergarten

Rain sets will be provided by Jacaranda Pre-School, and will be laundered by staff, ready for use each session.

WHAT ELSE TO BRING

Water

Parents/carers are required to provide a water bottle of fresh water at all sessions. There will be access to drinking water to supplement this when required on site. All participants who are onsite at bush kinder are required to have a water bottle.

Food

Parents/carers are required to provide a snack 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.

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.

Medications

Staff will bring children's medication and action plans which have been provided by children's parents.

Training and Awareness sessions

Staff must have a Level 2 First Aid Certificate.

Risk Benefit Assessment

A Risk assessment has been prepared and is available for parents to view.

Further Policy and Regulations

Bush Kinder is conducted as part of the Jacaranda Pre-School program and therefore is governed by the regulations and procedures of the Kindergarten. Due to location and environmental factors, variations to policy have been identified and different procedures created which are specific to Bush Kinder to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, staff and volunteers involved in the program.

We ask parents to view the policies regarding Bush Kinder which are available in the center's foyer, to gain a full understanding of the responsibilities of the Jacaranda Pre-School Committee, staff, volunteers and parents alike.

Bush Kinder Policy

Delivery and Collection

Dogs

Emergency Evacuation

Extreme Weather

Identification and Visibility

Play Benefit and Risk

Protective Clothing

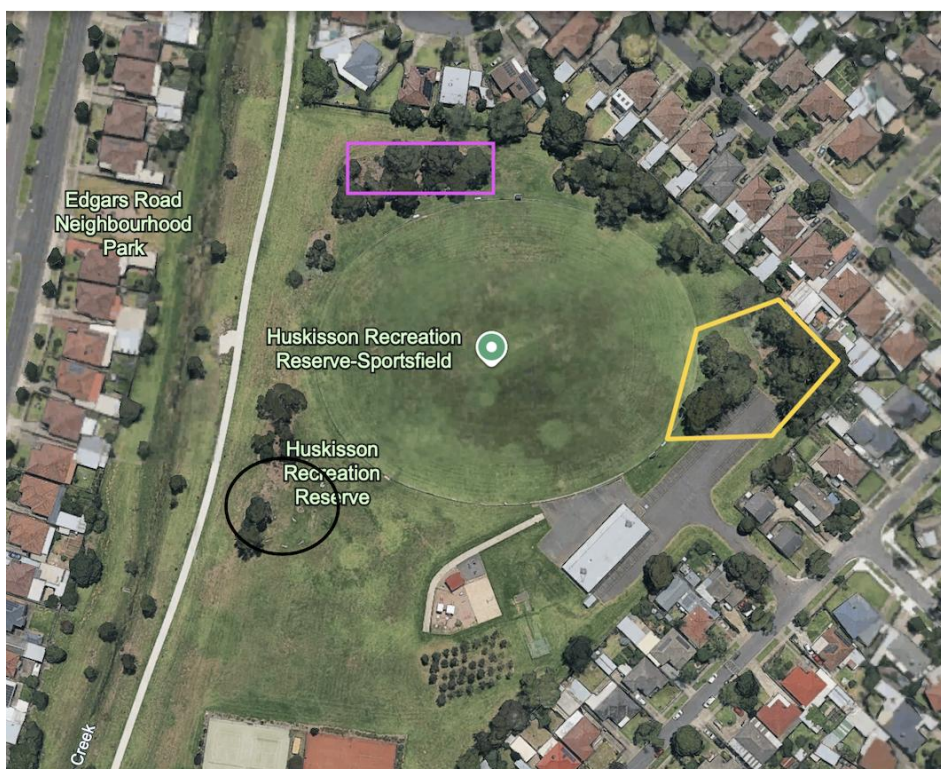
Snake Awareness and first aid

Bush Kinder Site- Huskisson Reserve

LOCATION

The Huskisson Reserve Bush Kinder site is located in Huskisson Reserve, Lalor, which is located behind Jacaranda Preschool – Kingsway Drive.

This site was chosen due to its location as it allows for staff to walk the children to and from Bush Kinder within the longer kindergarten session.



PICK UP AND DROP-OFF

The children participating in the Bush Kinder program at Huskisson Reserve will be dropped off and picked up from the kindergarten (Jacaranda Preschool – Kingsway Drive) at the start and conclusion of their kinder session.

Parents / guardians are required to bring a bag/backpack with change of clothes and sunhat, a water bottle filled with clean drinking water, and their lunch and a fruit/vegetable snack.

The staff will look at the weather forecast and determine if it is safe to go to the Bush Kinder site for a session.

Please refer to main Delivery and Collection of Children Policy for full procedures relating to collection by authorised person, late collection and late collection fees.

Toilets

To maintain required staff ratios set by regulations at all times, the public toilets at Football pavilion will only be utilised by children when the whole group walks to the toilets. The children will be encouraged to go to the toilet prior to leaving kindergarten.

Huskisson Reserve Bush Kinder Program.

A. TORRENTIAL RAIN, HAIL, ELECTRICAL STORM, EXTREME WINDS.



Assembly point A:
Shelter at
playground.

Group to wait here
until torrential rain,
hail, electrical storm,
extreme winds pass,
and it's safe to resume
normal activities.

In the event that deems it unsafe to evacuate to the playground shelter, we will evacuate to the site and return to kinder- Assembly Point B.

If Assembly Point B is deemed unsuitable, then the kindergarten's Emergency Management Plan will take over.



**Assembly point B:
Kindergarten**

Group to evacuate and return to kinder due to flooding or an emergency.

If Assembly Point B is deemed unsuitable, then the kindergarten's Emergency Management Plan will take over.