



PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for Gembrook Preschool to plan and conduct safe and appropriate Bush Kinder sessions



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Gembrook Preschool is committed to:

- providing opportunities through the educational program for children to explore and experience the natural environment on a regular basis
- ensuring that Bush Kinder sessions contribute to children’s learning and development
- ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times, conducting a risk assessment (*refer to Definitions*) and ensuring authorisations are obtained from parents/guardians
- providing adequate supervision of all children during Bush Kinder sessions

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Gembrook Preschool, including during Bush Kinder sessions.

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	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Developing a <i>Bush Kinder Policy</i> in consultation with the nominated supervisor, staff and parents/guardians at the service (<i>Regulation 168</i>)	R	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that staff, volunteers, students and others at the service are provided with a copy of the <i>Bush Kinder Policy</i> and comply with its requirements (<i>Regulation 171</i>)	R	√	√	√	√



Ensuring that all parents/guardians have completed, signed and dated their child's enrolment form (<i>refer to Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i>) including details of persons able to authorise an educator to take their child outside the service premises (<i>Regulation 99, 160, 161</i>)	R	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that parents/guardians or persons named in the enrolment record have provided written authorisation (<i>Regulation 99</i>) within the past 12 months where the service is to take the child on regular outings (<i>refer to Definitions</i>), and that this authorisation is kept in the child's enrolment record (<i>Regulation 161</i>) (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>)	R	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that a child does not attend Bush Kinder unless prior written authorisation has been provided by the parent/guardian or person named in the child's enrolment record, and that the authorisation includes all details required under <i>Regulation 99, 102(4)</i> (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>)	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that the number of children attending Bush Kinder does not exceed the number for which service approval has been granted on that day	R	√	√		
Ensuring that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times, including during excursions, regular outings and service events (<i>Regulations 123</i>) The Gembrook Preschool committee require that a minimum of Three (3) educators and two (2) additional adult helpers must be in attendance during Bush Kinder sessions	R	√	√		
Ensuring that children are adequately supervised (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) at all times (<i>Regulation 122</i>) (<i>National Law: Section 165</i>)	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that parents/guardians, volunteers, students and all adults participating in Bush Kinder are adequately and actively supervised at all times and are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children (<i>refer to Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy</i>).	R	√	√		
Ensuring that a risk assessment (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) is carried out for the Bush Kinder site (<i>in accordance with Regulation 101</i>) before authorisation is sought from parents/guardians (<i>Regulation 100</i>), including suitability of venue	R	√	√		
Ensuring the risk assessment (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) identifies and assesses the risks, specifies how these will be managed and/or minimised, and includes all details required by <i>Regulation 101</i>	R	√	√		
Ensuring that the Gembrook Preschool has a copy of the Gilwell Park Emergency Management Plan and that all staff are aware of any procedures that need to be followed	√	√	√		
Developing strategies to improve children's safety in high-risk situations such as near water or near a road (<i>refer to Supervision of Children Policy, Water Safety Policy and Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy</i>)	R	√	√		
Ensuring a new risk assessment (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) is completed when circumstances change at Bush Kinder	R	√	√		

Bush Kinder

Gembrook Preschool Association Inc
 Registration No: A0010029N
 ABN: 36 754 804 648



Ensuring that staff comply with the service's <i>Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy</i>	R	√	√	√	√
Encouraging parents/guardians to comply with the service's <i>Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy</i>	R	√	√	√	√
Providing road safety education as part of the curriculum		√	√		
Ensuring that Bush Kinder sessions are based on an approved learning framework, the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child (<i>refer to Curriculum Development Policy</i>)		√	√		
Ensuring that there is a clear purpose and educational value to each Bush Kinder session, and that this is communicated to parents/guardians		√	√		
Ensuring a Bush Kinder information session is coordinated, which all families/guardians must attend.		√	√		
Discussing the aims and objectives of the Bush Kinder session, and items of special interest, with children prior to undertaking the activity		√	√		
Involving children in consultation and decision-making processes		√	√		√
Ensuring that the Bush Kinder site is inclusive of all children regardless of their abilities, additional needs or medical conditions (<i>refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy, Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy, Asthma Policy, Anaphylaxis Policy, Diabetes Policy and Epilepsy Policy</i>)	R	√	√		
Ensuring strategies are in place to provide an accurate attendance record (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) for children attending Bush Kinder	R	√			
Ensuring that each child's personal medication and current medical management plan is taken to Bush Kinder (<i>refer to Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy, Asthma Policy, Anaphylaxis Policy, Diabetes Policy and Epilepsy Policy</i>)	R	√	√	√	√
Ensuring an accurate attendance record (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) is kept for children attending Bush Kinder	R	√	√		√
Ensuring strategies are in place to ensure that there is an accurate list of all adults participating in Bush Kinder, including parents/guardians, volunteers and students, with contact details for each individual	R	√	√		
Understanding that, all adults participating in Bush Kinder as a volunteer, will always be under the immediate supervision of an ECT/educator or the approved provider				√	√
Understanding that, siblings and other children not enrolled in the program must be supervised and cared for by their parents/guardians at all times				√	
If participating in Bush Kinder, informing an educator immediately if a child appears to be missing from the group				√	√
Ensuring all adult helpers, including parents/guardians, volunteers and students are provided with a copy of Gembrook	√	√	√		

Bush Kinder

Gembrook Preschool Association Inc
 Registration No: A0010029N
 ABN: 36 754 804 648



Preschool's "Responsibilities of adult helpers during Bush Kinder" document (<i>refer to Attachment 2</i>)					
Taking a portable first aid kit (including required medication for dealing with medical conditions) to Bush Kinder (<i>Regulation 89</i>)	R	√	√		√
Ensuring a mobile phone, the emergency contact details for each child and the contact details of their medical practitioner are taken to Bush Kinder for notification in the event of an incident, injury, trauma or illness (<i>Regulation 98</i>)	R	√	√		
Ensuring sunscreen and hats (if required) are taken to Bush Kinder	R	√	√		√
Informing parents/guardians of items required by children for Bush Kinder e.g., snack/lunch, sunscreen, coat etc	√	√	√		
Ensuring each child, and any other participant at the service, wears appropriate clothing (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and are dressed appropriately for outdoor activities	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that the weather report is checked on the days leading up to a Bush Kinder session, and deciding whether the session will proceed or be cancelled due to extreme weather (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) through consultation between educators and Gembrook Preschool Committee of Management executive members. In the event a session is cancelled, all families will be notified via SMS or Storypark by 7pm the day prior to the Bush Kinder session	√	√	√		
Providing Gilwell Park with session dates and times, and notifying them if a cancellation occurs	√	√	√		
Displaying a notice at the service indicating that children are at Bush Kinder, including the location of Bush Kinder and expected time of return to the service	√	√	√		
Ensuring each child, and any other participant at the service including staff, wears appropriate protective clothing (<i>refer to Definitions</i>), sun protective clothing (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and sunscreen for all outdoor activities during the sun protection times (<i>refer to Definitions</i>)	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring safety protocols are followed while cooking on campfires. Fire rating checked before planning campfires.	√	√	√		
Providing fire safety education as part of the curriculum		√	√		
Ensuring hygiene practices are maintained while at Bush Kinder (<i>refer to Hygiene Policy</i>)		√	√		



BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

Allowing children time outdoors in the natural environment is becoming increasingly important. Gembrook Preschool introduced a Bush Kinder program as part of the four-year-old funded program. Regular Bush Kinder sessions have shown the following benefits:

- Enhanced social skills and cooperation
- Improved problem-solving abilities

Bush Kinder

Gembrook Preschool Association Inc
 Registration No: A0010029N
 ABN: 36 754 804 648



- Increased gross motor skills, such as climbing, balance, and coordination
- Greater appreciation and respect for the environment
- Enhanced creativity and imagination
- More time spent outdoors, away from technology and toys

Children attend Bush Kinder sessions during terms 1, 2, 3, and 4. These are held at Gilwell Park Scout Camp at a designated campsite as detailed in the map (*refer to Attachment 3*).

Bush Kinder sessions are planned to extend the educational program and further develop the current interests of children. The *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (*refer to Sources*) states that “Participating in their communities strengthens children’s sense of identity and wellbeing” (Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world). The purpose and educational value of each Bush Kinder session should be clearly communicated to parents/guardians.

A risk assessment (*refer to Definitions*) must be carried out for the Bush Kinder site to determine any risks to children’s health, safety or wellbeing before permission is sought from parents/guardians (*Regulations 100, 101*). The risk assessment must identify each risk and specify how the risk will be managed and/or minimised (*Regulation 101*). Written authorisation for the child to attend Bush Kinder must be obtained from a parent/guardian or person named in the child’s enrolment record at the beginning of each Kinder year. For a copy of the Bush Kinder authorisation form *refer to Attachment 1*.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- *National Quality Standard*, including Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice and Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au



DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g., Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file.

Adequate supervision: (In relation to this policy) **supervision** entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children

Bush Kinder

Gembrook Preschool Association Inc
 Registration No: A0010029N
 ABN: 36 754 804 648



- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Appropriate Clothing: All individuals attending Bush Kinder, including children, adults, and staff, are required to bring the following clothing to ensure safety and comfort in various weather conditions:

- Closed-toe shoes are mandatory. Sandals or open-toe footwear are not permitted.
- Warm waterproof jacket and waterproof pants, appropriate to the current weather conditions.
- Long pants and long sleeve tops are mandatory. Shorts, skirts, or dresses are not permitted.
- Orange sun hats will be provided by Gembrook Preschool for each child during the sun protection times (*refer to Definitions*) (*refer to Sun Protection Policy*). Orange woollen beanies will be provided for each child to wear during all other times.

Attendance Record: Kept by the service to record details of each child attending the service including name, time of arrival and departure, signature of person delivering and collecting the child or of the nominated supervisor or educator (*Regulation 158(1)*).

Excursion: An outing organised by the education and care service. The written permission of parents/guardians or a person named on the child’s enrolment record as having lawful authority must be obtained before educators/staff take children outside the service premises.

Under the *National Regulations*, the definition of ‘excursion’ does not include an outing organised by services operating from a school site, where the child/ren leave the service premises with an educator/staff member, but do not leave the school site’.

Extreme weather: Any weather in which it is deemed unsafe for children to attend Bush Kinder sessions. This includes storms, total fire bans, CFA extreme fire ratings and strong winds.

Risk assessment: (In the context of this policy) a risk assessment must identify and assess any hazard that poses a risk to a child’s health, safety and/or wellbeing while at Bush Kinder, and specify how these risks will be managed and/or minimised (*Regulation 101*). Risk assessments must consider:

- the proposed route and location of the excursion
- any water hazards (*refer to Water Safety Policy*)
- any risks associated with water-based activities (*refer to Water Safety Policy*)
- transport to and from the proposed location of the excursion (*refer to Occupational Health and Safety Policy*)
- the number of adults and children participating in the Bush Kinder session
- the number of educators or other responsible adults who will be providing supervision given the level of risk, and whether or not specialised skills are required (e.g., lifesaving skills)
- the proposed activities, and the impact of this on children with varying levels of ability, additional needs or medical conditions
- the proposed duration of Bush Kinder, and the impact of this on children with varying levels of ability, additional needs or medical conditions
- any items/information that should be taken to Bush Kinder e.g., first aid kit, emergency contact details for children, medication for children with known medical conditions (such as asthma, anaphylaxis and diabetes) and a mobile phone.

A sample Excursion Risk Management Plan is provided on the ACECQA website at: www.acecqa.gov.au (search Sample forms and templates)

Regular outing: (In relation to education and care services) means an excursion (*refer to Definitions*) such as a walk, drive or trip to/from a location that the service visits regularly as part of its educational program, and where the circumstances covered by the risk assessment (*refer to Definitions*) are the same on each trip. If an excursion is a regular outing, an authorisation from parents/guardians is only required to be obtained once every 12 months. A new authorisation is required if there is any change to the circumstances of the regular outing.

Supervision: refer to adequate supervision in *Definitions* above.

Bush Kinder

Gembrook Preschool Association Inc
 Registration No: A0010029N
 ABN: 36 754 804 648



Sun protection times: The sun protection times are a forecast from the [Bureau of Meteorology](#) for the times of the day when UV levels are forecast to be 3 and above. At these levels there is a risk of skin damage for all skin types. In Victoria, UV levels regularly reach 3 and above from mid-August to the end of April. You can find the sun protection times for your location on the free SunSmart Global UV [widget](#) or [app](#), at [sunsmart.com.au](#), at [myuv.com.au](#) or in the weather section of the daily newspaper.



SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: www.acecqa.gov.au
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- ELAA's Road Safety Education program www.childroadsafety.org.au
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*: www.education.vic.gov.au
- VicRoads: www.vicroads.vic.gov.au
- Child Health Promotion Research Centre & Edith Cowan University (2012) *National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education*: <https://childroadsafety.org.au/assets/Research/National-Practices-for-EC-RSE.pdf>

RELATED POLICIES

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- Administration of First Aid
- Administration of Medication
- Anaphylaxis
- Asthma
- Code of Conduct
- Curriculum Development
- Dealing with Medical Conditions
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Diabetes
- Emergency and Evacuation
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Epilepsy
- Excursions and Service Events
- Fees
- Food Safety
- Hygiene
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Inclusion and Equity
- Interactions with Children
- Nutrition and Active Play
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Participation of Volunteers and Students
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Road Safety and Safe Transport
- Sun Protection
- Supervision of Children
- Water Safety



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
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172 (2)*).



ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Bush Kinder authorisation form
- Attachment 2: Responsibilities of adult helpers during Bush Kinder
- Attachment 3: Bush Kinder site location map



AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Gembrook Preschool on 21st March 2016.

REVIEW DATE: 21st July 2024

PASSED AT COMMITTEE MEETING: 14th August 2024

REVIEW FREQUENCY: 1 Year

NEXT REVIEW DUE: Annually as per policy review calendar

ATTACHMENT 1. BUSH KINDER AUTHORISATION FORM



Authorisation to Attend Bush Kinder

1st January 2024 – 31st December 2024

I _____ (parent/guardian full name) give permission for my child _____ (child's full name) to participate in Bush Kinder at Gilwell Park, 2555 Gembrook-Launching Place Road, Gembrook. Bush Kinder provides the opportunity for children to explore and engage with a natural bushland setting.

Bush Kinder is timetabled fortnightly and families will be provided with a list of scheduled Busk Kinder dates, from March to November. Children attend 12:30om to 4:00pm, and should be delivered to Gilwell Park Camp Site (A) and collected from the Main Office Gate 2 by parents/guardians. In the event of forecast inclement or unsafe weather conditions, families will be advised via StoryPark by 7pm the evening prior to the scheduled date, that Bush Kinder is cancelled and the session will take place at Gembrook Preschool.

A maximum of 33 children will attend Bush Kinder, supervised by 4 educators and a minimum of 2 parent/guardian helpers. During Bush Kinder sessions educators can be contacted via mobile telephone number: 0417 180 418 or Gilwell Park Office telephone number: (03) 5967 8888.

Parent/guardian are required to sign the attendance book at Bush Kinder when delivering and collecting children, and a list of all children, educators and parent/guardian helpers will be carried by the Early Childhood Teacher throughout the session, as well as a copy being lodged at the Gilwell Park Main Office. Throughout the Bush Kinder session a roll call and head count will be conducted before and after the full group undertake transitions from one area to another within Gilwell Park.

In emergency situations I _____ (parent/guardian full name) authorise educators, where it is impractical to communicate with me, to consent to my child receiving medical treatment as may be deemed necessary by a legally qualified medical practitioner. I agree to pay any expenses incurred including transportation and hospital accommodation.

A Bush Kinder Risk Assessment is available at Gembrook Preschool (please circle) Yes/No

SIGNED: _____ Date: _____

Emergency contact name and contact telephone number during Bush Kinder sessions:

- 1. _____ Ph: _____
- 2. _____ Ph: _____



ATTACHMENT 2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADULT HELPERS DURING BUSH KINDER

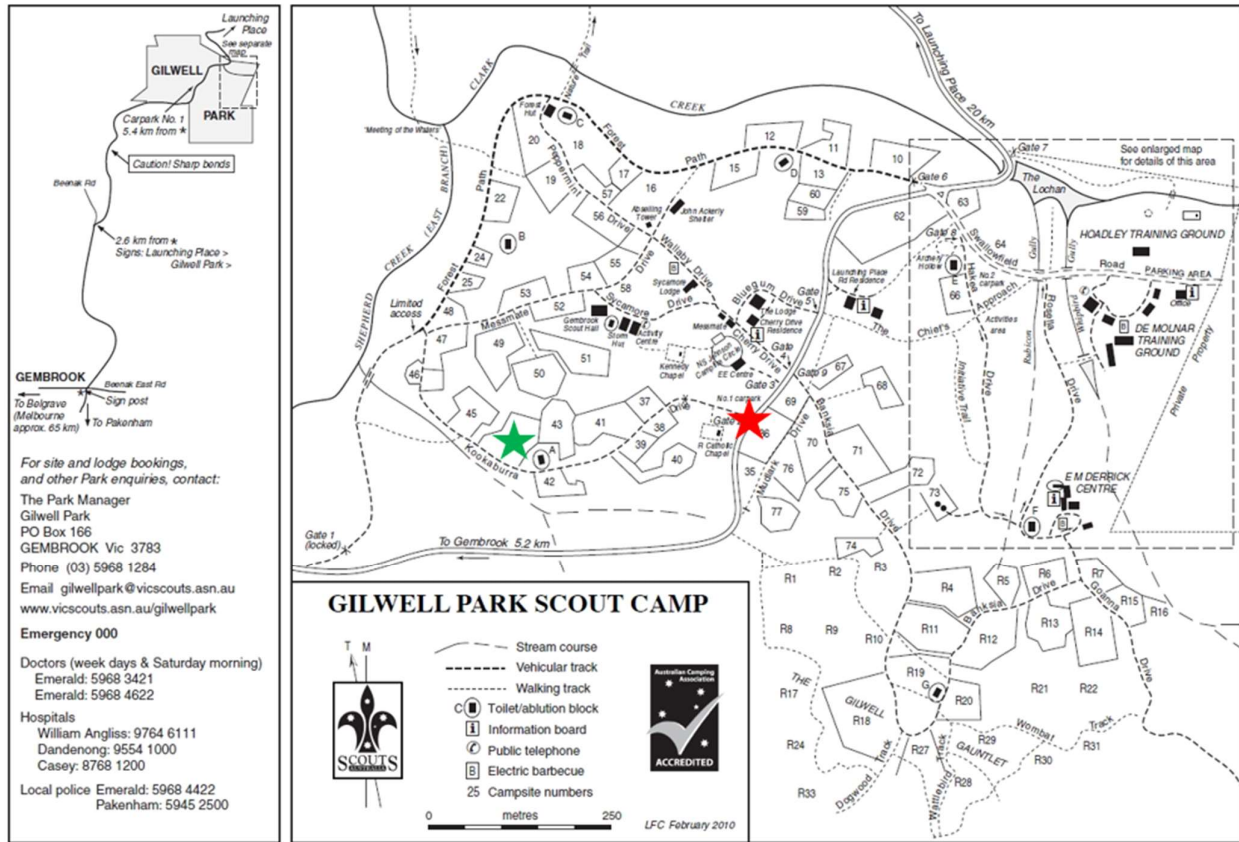
Thankyou for volunteering your time to help during our Bush Kinder sessions. Helping us during a Bush Kinder session requires some specific responsibilities as outlined below:

- Parent helpers must remain onsite at the Bush Kinder location throughout the session to assist with supervision of all children.
- All children and parents are required to be signed in at the beginning of each session. When you volunteer as a parent helper at Bush Kinder, we have a duty of care not only to the children but also to you as a volunteer. This ensures a safe and supportive environment for everyone.
- Parent helpers are not permitted to take children to the toilet, this includes your own children, nor use the toilet while a child is present. This is in accordance with our Bush Kinder policy, ensuring that parents/guardians, volunteers, students and all adults participating in Bush Kinder are adequately supervised at all times and are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children.
- While walking through the park, children are required to walk between three (3) staff members. Your role as a parent helper is to assist in ensuring that the group remains together and follows staff members.
- Siblings and other children not enrolled in the program are welcome to join the Bush Kinder session. However, you are responsible for their supervision and care at all times. Additionally, you must ensure that they follow the same safety protocols as the rest of the group.
- Ensure you are familiar with the boundaries of the Bush Kinder site. Your role as a parent helper is to assist in ensuring that the group always remains within these boundaries.
- In the unlikely event of an emergency, staff will assign you a specific role. Please follow all instructions from staff to ensure safety of the entire group.

Bush Kinder



ATTACHMENT 3. BUSH KINDER SITE LOCATION MAP



★ Main entrance to Gilwell Park

★ Bush Kinder Site

To get to the Bush Kinder site:

- Enter through the main gate (Gate 2).
- Veer through the carpark to the left.
- Drive through the second gate and down the hill.
- When you reach the toilet block on the right you can find a place to park, the Bush Kinder site is the campsite below the toilet block.
- When leaving, continue in a forward direction, taking each 1st right hand turn until you drive past the Scout Hall and oval and exit through Gate 4.

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