



DAME NELLIE MELBA
KINDERGARTEN
EST 1915

DNMK Bush Kinder Handbook



Dame Nellie Melba Kindergarten acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we learn and play, the Wurundjeri people.

We pay our respects to ancestors past, elders present and leaders of the future.

Bush Kinder Sessions

Bush kinder will commence in week 4 of Term 1, allowing time for children to settle into their new kinder routine and build relationships with their educators.

The sessions will then run every Friday through term time excluding the last Friday of Term 4.

Session Times

Currawongs: 8.30am-11.30am

Rainbow Lorikeets: 1.00pm-4.00pm

Participation.

To participate in this program parents/carers must complete and return to kinder prior to the first session a **Bush Kinder Permission Form (Regular Outing)** as provided at the start of Term 1.

If there is any change to Authorised Persons permission to collect your child, you must update Story Park Manage prior to the Friday Bush Kinder session.

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 the DNMK mobile number into your phone.

DNMK Mobile: 0481 417 538

Program Overview

DNMK has long had a reputation for supporting children's engagement with the natural world and with the inclusion of Bush Kinder in the 4yo program we hope to further these opportunities. Research has shown that offering children the opportunity to engage with nature in a totally unconstructed, self-driven way leads to "Increased confidence, motivation and concentration, increased social, physical, imaginative and language skills (and) deeper conceptual understandings and respect for the natural environment".

(Gill, 2011; Fjortoft, 2004; Malone & Waite, 2016; O'Brien & Murray, 2008; O'Brien, 2009)

Bush Kinder supports children in problem solving and managing risk in ways that even our beautiful yards at DNMK do not quite do. Without the addition of any man-made resources children will have to problem solve and create their play spaces only with what nature provides. They will have to navigate challenges and changes that may be out of their control: weather, change in seasons, changes to the environment from week to week subsequently building their resilience and confidence.

Each child's developmental progression, advancing skill levels and particular interests will be documented by their teachers and used to support their learning both at Bush Kinder and at

DNMK. Teachers will support the children as they take risks and face challenges, allowing them the space to find their own outcomes while gently scaffolding their learning.

We hope that through these regular, extended periods of time in nature the children develop a deeper understanding of the natural world and connection to the land. Introducing them to a lifelong understanding of and care for our environment.

We hope to foster an understanding of First Nations culture and connection to the land and develop the children's own identities as future care takers of our country and indeed, world.

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 on the Yarning Mat. Children will run through the rules and expectations together at the start of every session including acknowledging the natural and marked boundaries. The group may also have a yarn about a particular topic of interest that has emerged or refresh their ideas around what happened during the previous session, supporting a continuation of learning. The children will then be free to engage in play within the boundaries of the Bush Kinder site. Approximately halfway through the session the children will be gathered to sit together, chat, eat a snack and have a drink, toilet and then returning to their play for the rest of the session.

Educators

Each session will be led by the group's kinder teacher and 1-2 additional educators depending on enrolled numbers per session. The ratio of educators to children will be 1:8

For example if there are 15 children enrolled in the program there will be 2 educators on site.

In term 1 there is an additional educator to support the group as they settle into the environment and expectations.

Robins

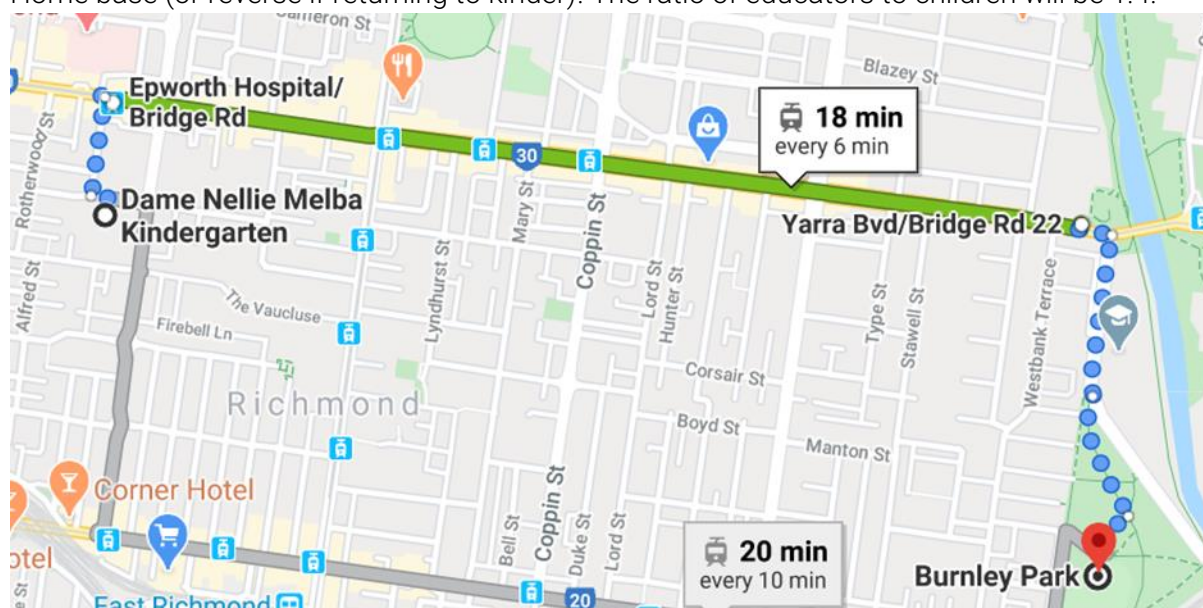
Children attending the Friday Robins program are welcome to enrol in the Bush Kinder program.

Currawong Group -children are to be dropped off onsite at Burnley Park. At the end of the session the children will return to DNMK via tram with their educators.

Rainbow Lorikeet Group – children will start their day at DNMK as usual. They will leave DNMK at 12.30pm with their educators. Children can then be collected from Bush Kinder at 4.00pm or they will return to kinder with their educators until Robins finishes at 5.30pm.

Additional educators accompany the children during the travel on Public Transport.

Children will travel via tram on Bridge road to the Yarra Bvd stop and walk to the Bush Kinder Home base (or reverse if returning to kinder). The ratio of educators to children will be 1:4.



Attendance

We ask that parents/carers are diligent and exercise their own judgement in assessing whether it is appropriate for their child to attend Bush Kinder each session. Children should not attend Bush Kinder if they are ill, excessively tired or if parents are concerned about their well-being due to forecast weather conditions. Parents will be contacted to collect their child if the teacher feels they are not coping with the session due to the above reasons.

Very occasionally children starting their day in the Robins program at DNMK may show signs that attending Bush Kinder may not be in the best interest of the child, or the group. They may be very tired, or generally 'out of sorts'. The teacher will contact the parents before they leave for Bush Kinder to discuss the child staying in the Robins program for the day, or if deemed unwell, being collected.

Session cancellation

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

Reason for cancellation	Notification	Contact Person
Predicted Extreme Weather	Story Park notification the evening prior.	Director -Georgi Kindergarten Teacher
Sudden extreme weather	SMS	Kindergarten Teacher
Emergency Evacuation	SMS	Kindergarten Teacher
Teacher absence (every effort will be made to cover with a suitable educator)	Story Park the evening prior or SMS on morning of session.	Director -Georgi

Note: If on arrival, Bush Kinder is not set up on site, this means that the session has been cancelled.

Where the group has been evacuated or relocated the SMS message to parents/carers will specify the location for pickup.

Weather

Bush kinder will operate in almost all-weather conditions. Our Extreme Weather Policy outlines the occasions Bush Kinder would be cancelled, however in summary it will be days 35 degrees and over and when severe storms or winds are predicted. Teachers will make sensible decisions on the morning of sessions if the weather looks extremely unfavourable and it has not been previously predicted.

Parents are encouraged to check the weather on the Friday mornings and decide if you are comfortable with the days outlook. There are no refunds for sessions if they are cancelled due to extreme weather.

Clothing

Parents are required to determine appropriate clothing based on the weather forecast for the day. Families will be required to purchase waterproof coveralls for the wet weather days. The opportunity to purchase via a bulk kinder order will be offered in Term 1.

By it's very nature Bush Kinder can result in small scratches and grazes from outdoor activities -climbing trees, sitting in undergrowth etc. We recommend long sleeve tops and long pants to minimise these small injuries, even in summer. Light weight, loose clothing on hotter days should be considered.

It is important that children wear appropriate and protective clothing and footwear which allows

- children to move freely and undertake activities such as climbing, balancing, and running.
- keeps children warm and dry in cold/wet weather
- adheres to the SunSmart policy in warmer weather and if the UV is predicted to be 3 and over
- helps prevent bites, scratches and stings
- where possible is made from natural fabrics which allow the body to breathe and is comfortable against the skin
- footwear: keeps feet and toes covered and has a flexible sole to allow children to climb and balance on uneven surfaces

Recommended clothing

Hot Weather	Cold Weather
Light loose-fitting long sleeve tops and long pants, broad brimmed hat or legionnaires hat, closed toe shoes.	Waterproof coveralls, long pants, long sleeved top, beanie, waterproof gloves, thermals in very cold weather. Closed toe shoes.

Unacceptable clothing

Open toe shoes e.g. thongs, sandals, crocs. Singlet tops, dresses, clothing that can not be adjusted due to weather conditions e.g. only a woollen jumper on a summer's day, not enough layers in winter.

Change of clothes

Children should bring a change of clothes and footwear as these may become wet and muddy.

It is recommended that the spare clothing include:

- Top and bottoms of appropriate thickness/weight for the weather on the day
- 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).

The Bush Kinder 'on-site kit' will contain some spare clothing and waterproofs.

On high UV days (above 3) please ensure that you apply sunscreen prior to the session commencing. Sunscreen will be available for re-application during sessions.

Please refer to the Bush Kinder Protective Clothing Policy for more information.

Food and water

Children are to bring a large, full water bottle and a substantial snack. Please consider that the snack will not be refrigerated. This will be a very active session so please pack slightly more food than you think your child will need. Remember we are a Nut Aware kinder, so no nuts of any kind (including in muesli bars).

We also ask that you take all packaging off your child's food and place it in suitable containers.

Location

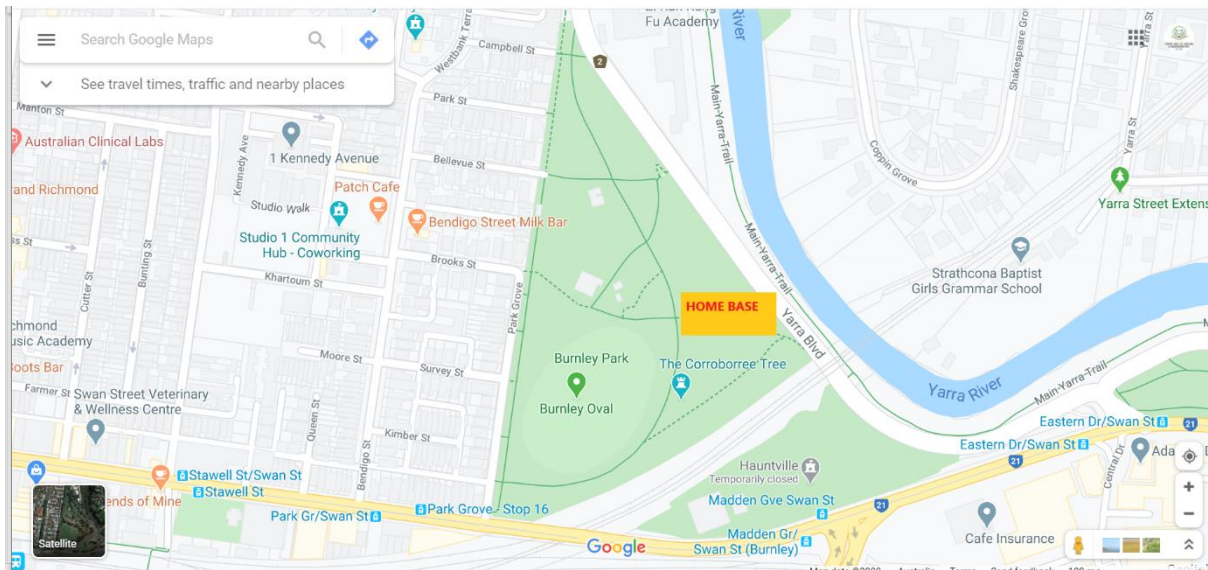
DNMK Bush Kinder will be located in Burnley Park.

Home Base -our regular meeting point is marked on the below image. This will be the drop off and collection point for Bush Kinder.

The site for each session will be defined by natural boundaries, coloured cones and flags. Each term the site will remain the same so the children become familiar with the boundaries that they can go to. During the sessions, the teachers may explore different areas with the children, however they will always return to Home Base for collection.

Burnley Park has public toilets, fresh water facilities and a covered pavilion that can be accessed in the event of unexpected weather.

There is parking along Park Grove for drop off and pick up.



Drop-off

Parents and carers need to ensure they:

- Sign in with an educator and put on an ID wrist band and hi-vis vest or waterproof coveralls
- Stay with your child at Home Base until the session begins.
- Apply sunscreen on high UV days
- Remind your child to put their back pack at the drop point.
- Remain respectful of educators supervising children at Bush Kinder by not distracting children or encouraging them to leave the yarning mat to play or chat.

Pick-up

Parents and carers need to ensure they:

- Wait for your child to be signed out by an educator and given permission to leave the Yarning Mat.
- Be mindful of not distracting/speaking with staff until all the children have departed.
- Be responsible for the supervision of your child while still at the Bush Kinder site.
- Collect the child's belongings (bag, water, hats, food containers, rubbish).
- 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.

Toileting

Please make sure your child goes to the toilet before leaving home for Bush Kinder.

We will be using the public toilets at Burnley Park. Before the sessions starts an educator will conduct a risk assessment and clean away any mess in the public toilets. The children will be taken to the toilets as a group before their mid-session snack. Educators will again check the

toilets before the children enter. Children will be given hand sanitiser before entering the toilets and once they have finished. During the session if a child needs to go to the toilet they will be escorted with an educator who will again check the toilet and wait at the cubicle door while the child uses the toilet, offering assistance if necessary.

Children returning to kinder for Robins will be taken to the toilets again before leaving the park to catch the tram.

Diagnosed medical conditions and medications

Parents and guardians of children with diagnosed medical conditions are required to provide a Medical Management Plan (completed by a registered medical practitioner) prior to the commencement of the child at DNMK at the start of the year. Copies of the Medical Management Plan and Medical Risk Minimisation Plan (also completed at the start of the year) for each child are taken to Bush Kinder by kindergarten staff in the Bush Kinder Medication Bag, along with any medications for the child which are normally kept at DNMK. Other medications may be signed in on arrival at Bush Kinder in accordance with DNMK's Administration of Medications Policy, using a Medication Record Sheet, a supply of which are kept in the Bush Kinder Medication Bag.

Risk Assessment

Extensive risk evaluation has been carried out by the Bush Kinder team and will be provided at the start of Term 1 with the authorisation form. There will also be a hard copy available in the Policy folder onsite at DNMK and in the Bush Kinder off-site document folder. The Risk Assessment is a living document as the Bush Kinder Team will regularly add to and adjust the description of risks as they may present over time.

Further policy and regulations

Bush Kinder is conducted as an extension of the 4yo kindergarten 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 and staff. When enrolling for the Bush Kinder program we ask parents to read the policies regarding Bush Kinder available on our website to gain a full understanding of the responsibilities of the Dame Nellie Melba Kindergarten Committee, staff, volunteers and parents alike. Full Policy documents are available for review on the DNM Kindergarten website.

Bush Kinder Policies

- Bush Kinder Delivery and Collection Policy
- Bush Kinder Dogs Awareness Policy
- Bush Kinder Emergency Evacuation Policy
- Bush Kinder Extreme Weather Policy

- Bush Kinder Identification and Visibility Policy
- Bush Kinder Protective Clothing Policy
- Bush Kinder Snake Awareness Policy

Please contact Georgi at georgi@dnmk.com.au or phone 94282282 for any further questions or concerns. We look forward to getting back to nature with you!

