



LINDISFARNE

Anglican Grammar School

Bush Preschool Parent Handbook




Acknowledgement of Country

At Bush Preschool we like to acknowledge the Minjungbal and Coodginburra Peoples of the Bundjalung Nation as the traditional custodians of this land.

We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge that we live, learn and play on sacred land.

For as long as our country has been here, First Nations peoples have lived in harmony with, and carefully managed Country, with which they have a deep spiritual connection.

We respect the deep and continuing connection that Traditional Owners have to these landscapes and recognise their ongoing role in caring for Country.



Here is the land, Here is the sky
Here are my friends and here am I
We acknowledge the Minjungbal/Coodginburra People
as the traditional custodians of the river, sea and land on which we play
Hands up, hands down, we are on Bundjalung ground!

Bush Preschool Offers



Five hours of uninterrupted time spent immersed in a local nature site



All weather exploration. There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing!



A small intimate group of 12 children, guided by qualified and experienced educators and volunteers



Alignment with the Early Years Learning Framework and National Quality Standards



Benefits of learning in nature

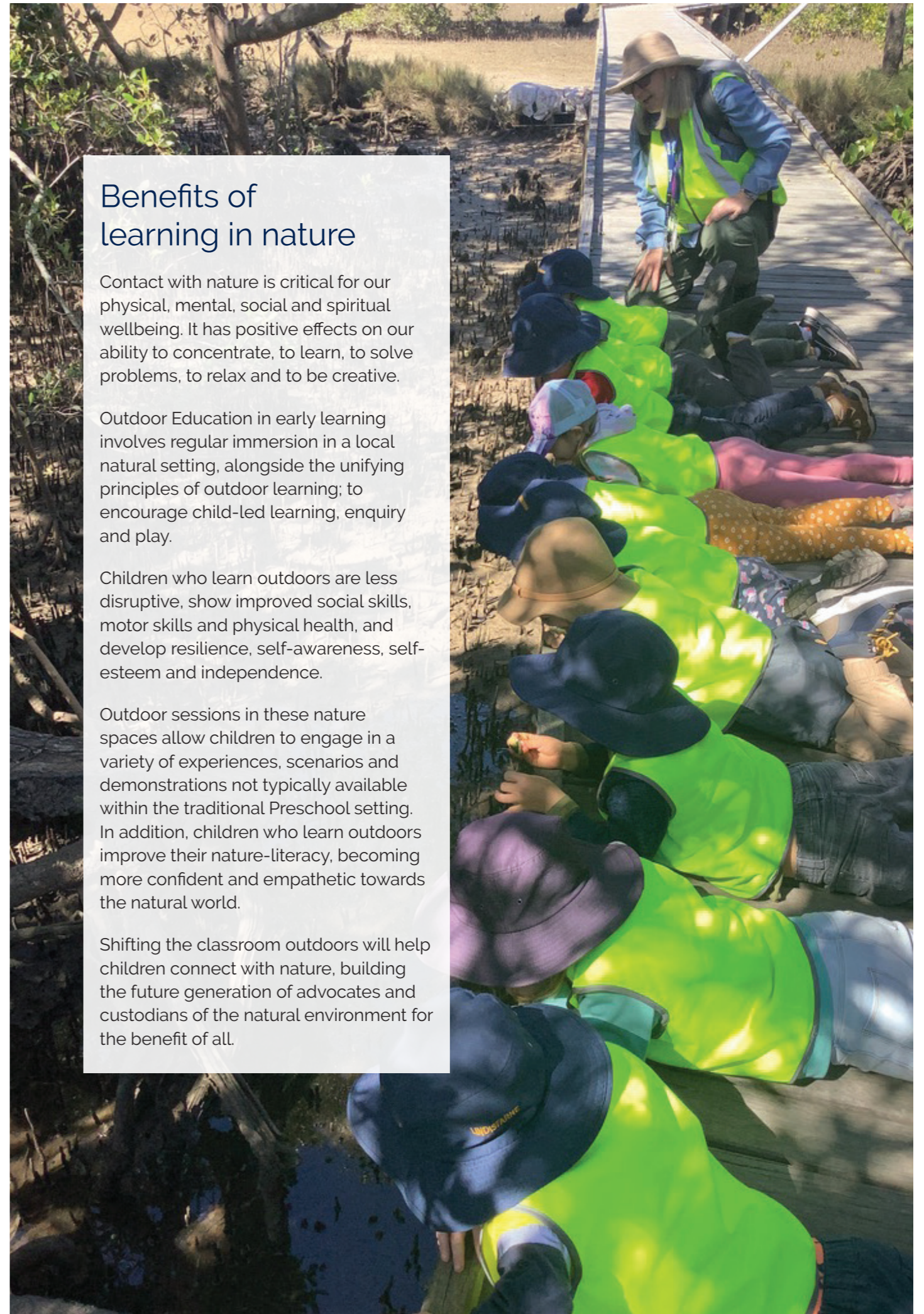
Contact with nature is critical for our physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing. It has positive effects on our ability to concentrate, to learn, to solve problems, to relax and to be creative.

Outdoor Education in early learning involves regular immersion in a local natural setting, alongside the unifying principles of outdoor learning; to encourage child-led learning, enquiry and play.

Children who learn outdoors are less disruptive, show improved social skills, motor skills and physical health, and develop resilience, self-awareness, self-esteem and independence.

Outdoor sessions in these nature spaces allow children to engage in a variety of experiences, scenarios and demonstrations not typically available within the traditional Preschool setting. In addition, children who learn outdoors improve their nature-literacy, becoming more confident and empathetic towards the natural world.

Shifting the classroom outdoors will help children connect with nature, building the future generation of advocates and custodians of the natural environment for the benefit of all.



Learning Outdoors in the Early Years Learning Framework



Identity - Children develop a sense of security with familiarity. Regular sessions learning outdoors helps children build and explore their identity and sense of belonging.



Community - Through firsthand experience children develop an awareness of their impact on the local environment and can get involved in caring for nature.



Wellbeing - Regular contact with nature relieves children's minds and ignites curiosity.

Outdoor environments allow children to expand and refine their abilities, mentally and physically.



Learning - Ever changing outdoor environments invite hypothesising, imagination, interaction, problem solving and experimenting.



Communication - Children can share stories, use natural materials to create art and interact with each other and their surroundings to create drama and music.

National Quality Standards for Early Childhood

A child's ability to access nature and learn outdoors is fundamental within the National Quality Framework. Learning outdoors promotes a child's health (Quality Standard 2) through relaxation, physical activity and spontaneous experiences. By placing children in a natural outdoor setting (Quality Standard 3), they have the opportunity for independent exploration and to participate in real-life projects and care for the environment they live in.

Treading Lightly

Our local nature reserves are rich in Aboriginal cultural heritage, holding social, spiritual, and ceremonial significance. They also provide important homes for many species of plant and animals. A 'leaving only footprints' philosophy teaches children positive environmental values and how to interact with our natural environment while having minimal environmental impact.

Our Bush Preschool program will also work closely with the Traditional Custodians and local governing bodies to help protect and care for the spaces we visit.

Program Overview

Our Bush Preschool will be structured as a regular excursion held on Thursdays and Fridays and is available to an intimate group of 12 children as an extra Preschool day. (Invoiced as an excursion via Parent Lounge)

Times

- **8.30am** Drop off on the deck between Preschool and Kindy, parent sign in/ apply suncream/repellent/safety vest/hats/ toilet stop
- **9.00am** School bus to *offsite location, Outdoor Education Program, morning tea and lunch
- **2.00pm** School bus back to Sunshine Ave location
- **2.30pm-2.45pm** Pick up from Preschool/Kindy deck area and parent sign out (or regular after school arrangements/OOSHC/ Turning Circle, etc)

**Fingal Headland and foreshore park Term 1 & 4 and Minjungbal Cultural Centre Term 2 & 3*

Staffing

- A qualified Early Childhood Teacher and Level 3 Forest School Leader
- A qualified Cert III assistant educator and Bush Kindy Leader
- Forest School Leader Certifications
- Adult to child ratio 1:6

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Sessions include

- Group morning meeting and Acknowledgement of Country (with story/discussion based on learning themes initiated during Bush Preschool)
- Exploration of the surrounding area and bush walks
- Learning about local flora and fauna species
- Learning about connection to the land and local Aboriginal history and culture
- Playing imaginative games using the resources nature provides
- Building shelters or structures from branches, with the help of other children and adults
- Counting objects or looking for mathematical patterns
- Recording observations in personalised nature journals
- Using tools safely e.g. whittling, carving, knots, ropes, pulleys and zip ties
- Service Learning opportunities with community organisations, e.g. Landcare, NSW National Parks and Wildlife, Aboriginal community groups and Surf Lifesaving
- Learning about safety while out in nature and the community
- Building gross motor skills using nature obstacles and through energetic play





Planning and Documentation

Each child will receive their own nature journal to add to during each session, in addition to contributing to the group Floorbook; an approach developed by Dr Claire Warden.

Dr Claire Warden is one of the world's leading consultants and writers on the use of consultative methods in education. Her approach using Floorbooks is often used within Nature Pedagogy to incorporate children's voices into intentional teaching and planning.

Daily Reflections will also be a part of documenting the learning journey and sent to parents following each session, through KindyHub.



FLOORBOOK APPROACH



Inquiry-based learning



Child-centred documentation



Response planning



Child consultation



Important Information

Fees

Fees are \$90 per session and will be charged a Term in advance, prior to attendance.

Attendance

We ask that Parents/Guardians are diligent and exercise their judgement in assessing whether it is appropriate for their child to attend. Children should not attend if they are ill, excessively tired or you are concerned about their well-being.

Parents are reminded to make sure they are easily contactable during Bush Preschool sessions.

Medications

All child emergency plans must be up to date and discussed with staff prior to commencing the first session. Staff will take individual children's medication and action plans with them to each session. Teachers will also carry full first aid kits, including EpiPen, Ventolin and snake bite kit.

Suncream, insect repellent and stop itch will be provided as needed.

Training and Awareness

The first four weeks of Term 1 will be dedicated to specific Bush Preschool training in order to prepare the children for Bush Preschool. Training sessions include topics such as dog/snake/wildlife/unknown persons awareness, visual boundaries, emergency procedures and will take place on the school grounds, and will continue during off-site sessions.

Emergency Evacuation

Emergency evacuation procedures will be followed in the event of:

- Fire
- Missing child
- Aggressive dog off leash
- Uninvited person causing unease
- Medical emergency or accident

Cancellations

Off-site sessions may be cancelled ahead of time, at short notice or during a session in the following circumstances.

- Staff absence
- Extreme weather
- Emergency evacuation
- Park ranger advice

In the event of an emergency evacuation or cancellation, all parents will be notified and the session relocated to the Preschool or on school grounds for the usual session times.

Contacts

Bush Preschool Co-Ordinator:
Michelle Donohue 0449 667 641

Bush Preschool Assistant Educator:
Lisa Maseyk 0402 579 800

Preschool Director:
Jo Hetherington 0408 541 968

Lindisfarne Anglican Grammar School:
Admin Office 07 5590 5099

Bush Preschool Philosophy

Our Bush Preschool program supports and builds upon our Early Learning Centres philosophy and the purpose and principles of Forest School; engaging children in real life, nature-based learning that empowers them to grow healthy, confidently and with an authentic sense of place and belonging.

We feel passionately about the many benefits of spending extended time out in nature and endeavour to provide these benefits to the children in our care. Benefits include social, emotional, physical, spiritual and mental wellbeing. Learning outdoors also has positive effects on our ability to concentrate, learn, solve problems, relax and be creative.

Children will see the world around them with wonder and learn to explore, consider and communicate their discoveries, questions and ideas. They will experience nature and all its elements throughout the six seasons and learn about the unique ecosystems, flora and fauna of the local area.

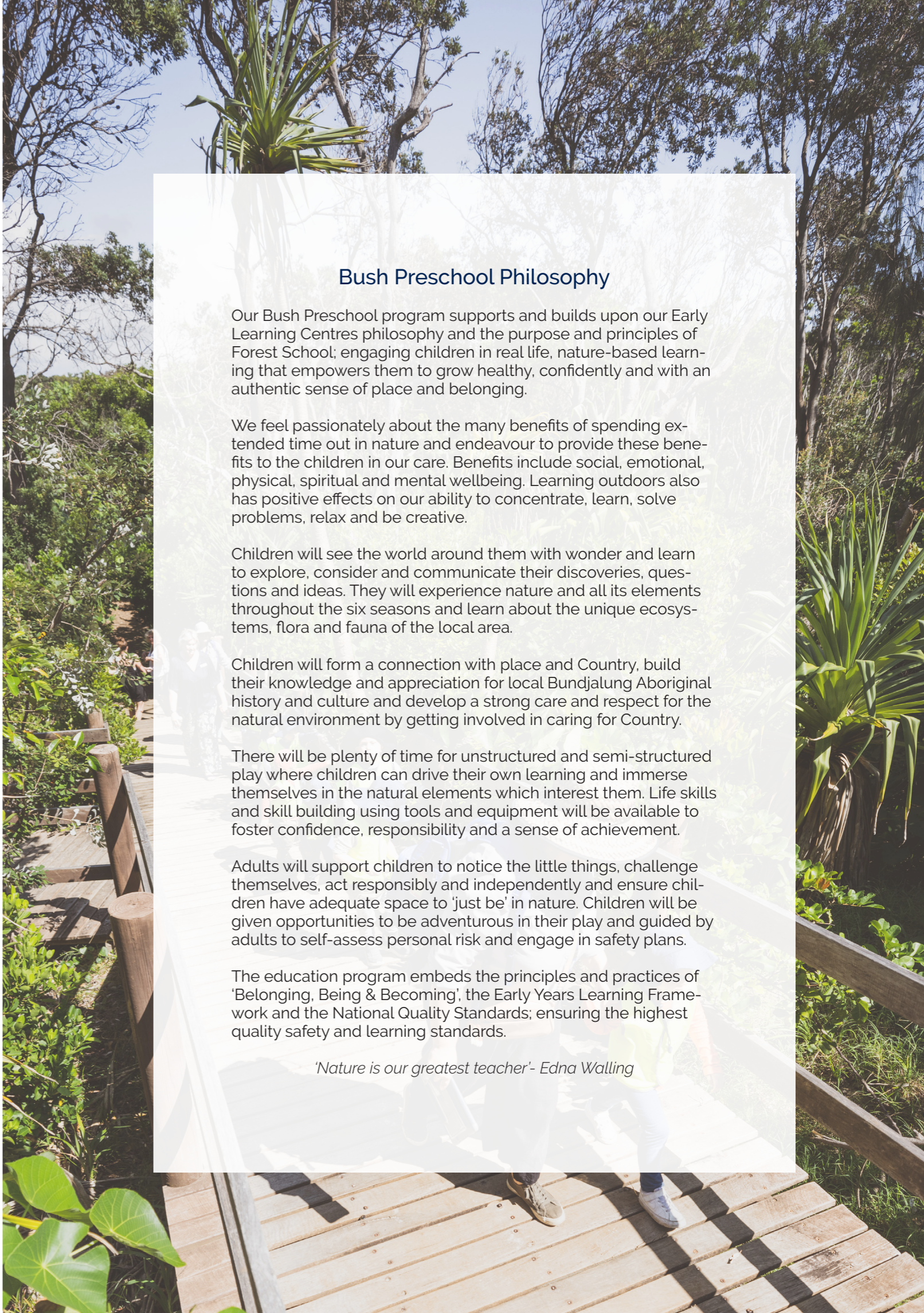
Children will form a connection with place and Country, build their knowledge and appreciation for local Bundjalung Aboriginal history and culture and develop a strong care and respect for the natural environment by getting involved in caring for Country.

There will be plenty of time for unstructured and semi-structured play where children can drive their own learning and immerse themselves in the natural elements which interest them. Life skills and skill building using tools and equipment will be available to foster confidence, responsibility and a sense of achievement.

Adults will support children to notice the little things, challenge themselves, act responsibly and independently and ensure children have adequate space to 'just be' in nature. Children will be given opportunities to be adventurous in their play and guided by adults to self-assess personal risk and engage in safety plans.

The education program embeds the principles and practices of 'Belonging, Being & Becoming', the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards; ensuring the highest quality safety and learning standards.

'Nature is our greatest teacher' - Edna Walling



Bush Preschool Ready?

Ability to follow instructions

Respond to teachers and stay with the group and within the boundaries. Has an awareness of being safe in public spaces.

Level of independence and self-help skills

Able to carry own bag and manage belongings such as lunchbox and shoes. Can toilet and dress themselves with minimal assistance.

Physical capabilities

Can walk longer distances without being carried and can manage a whole day outdoor all weather session.

Self confidence

Is confident being away from their parents/school grounds and travelling on a bus.



Important Information

Clothing

It is important that Bush Preschool participants wear appropriate and protective clothing and footwear that reflects the season and local weather forecast. It is expected that children wear clothes that:

- Have long sleeves and full length pants for entire session
- Allow them to move freely and undertake activities, such as climbing, balancing and running
- Keep them warm in Winter and cool in Summer, e.g. Thermals and layers in cold weather and cool cotton or fishing shirt in hot weather
- Protect them from the damaging effects of the sun and from bites, scratches and stings
- Foot wear that is enclosed, flexible and safe to climb/run in and waterproof shoes in wet weather

What to Bring

School hat, small backpack your child can carry with water bottle, morning tea, lunch and a full change of spare clothes and wet bag. We expect that lunchboxes are free of plastics and wrappers, so as to limit the environmental impact we have in this natural setting. Water will be available to re-fill bottles when needed.



Weather

Weather forecasts will be obtained from the Bureau of Meteorology and National Parks Alerts will be checked each morning. Parents will be notified via KindyHub or at drop off if a session is cancelled due to weather or a National Parks alert. 'See Cancellations'.



The Preschool will provide children with wet weather onesies and visibility vests.

Children will be unable to attend a Bush Preschool session if they arrive in unacceptable clothing, e.g. short sleeves, shorts, open footwear.

The Bush Preschool Sites

The Bush Preschool will be located at either Fingal Headland and foreshore park (Terms 1&4) or at the Minjungbal Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Walk on Water walking track (Terms 2&3). These are both very unique local sites which feature a diversity of coastal, bushland, littoral rainforest and mangrove habitats with rich flora, fauna and cultural history.

www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/walking-tracks/walk-on-water-walking-track

www.aussietowns.com.au/town/fingal-head-nsw

A 'base camp' will be set up each session at the relevant site, providing a centrally located area from which the children can explore. Each base camp will provide clear lines of sight with natural boundaries, shade and weather protection and easy access to amenities and picnic areas.

Both sites have access to toileting facilities and Lindisfarne staff will always accompany and attend to any child requiring assistance.

It is important for parents to familiarise themselves with these locations in the case of an emergency or if an early pick up is required.

Risk Benefit Assessment

The safety of the children is paramount in our Bush Preschool program. A detailed Risk Benefit Assessment and analysis will be an ongoing and continual part of the program and reviewed

before each session with both the educators and children. Each unique site will have a location specific Risk Benefit Assessment.

Risks and benefits addressed include:

- Waterways
- Insects, plants and animals
- Trees and terrain
- Boundaries
- Community interference
- Tool use

Swimming in or direct access to waterways will not be permitted during Bush Preschool sessions, unless organised with parents in advance.

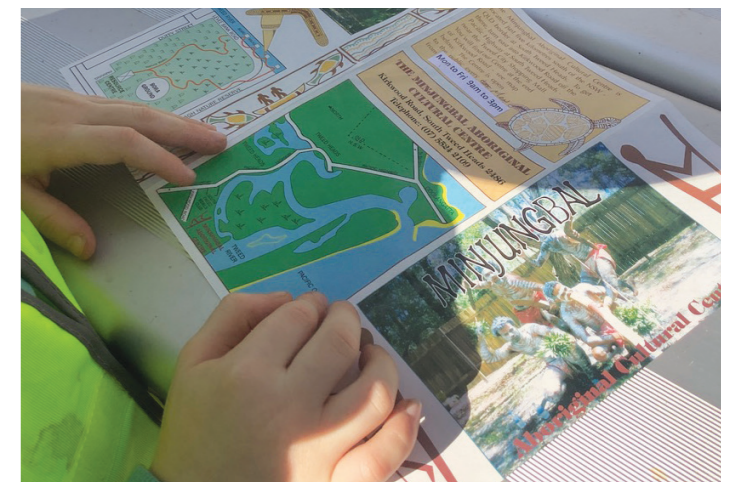
Policies and Procedures

Created specific for our Bush Preschool programs.

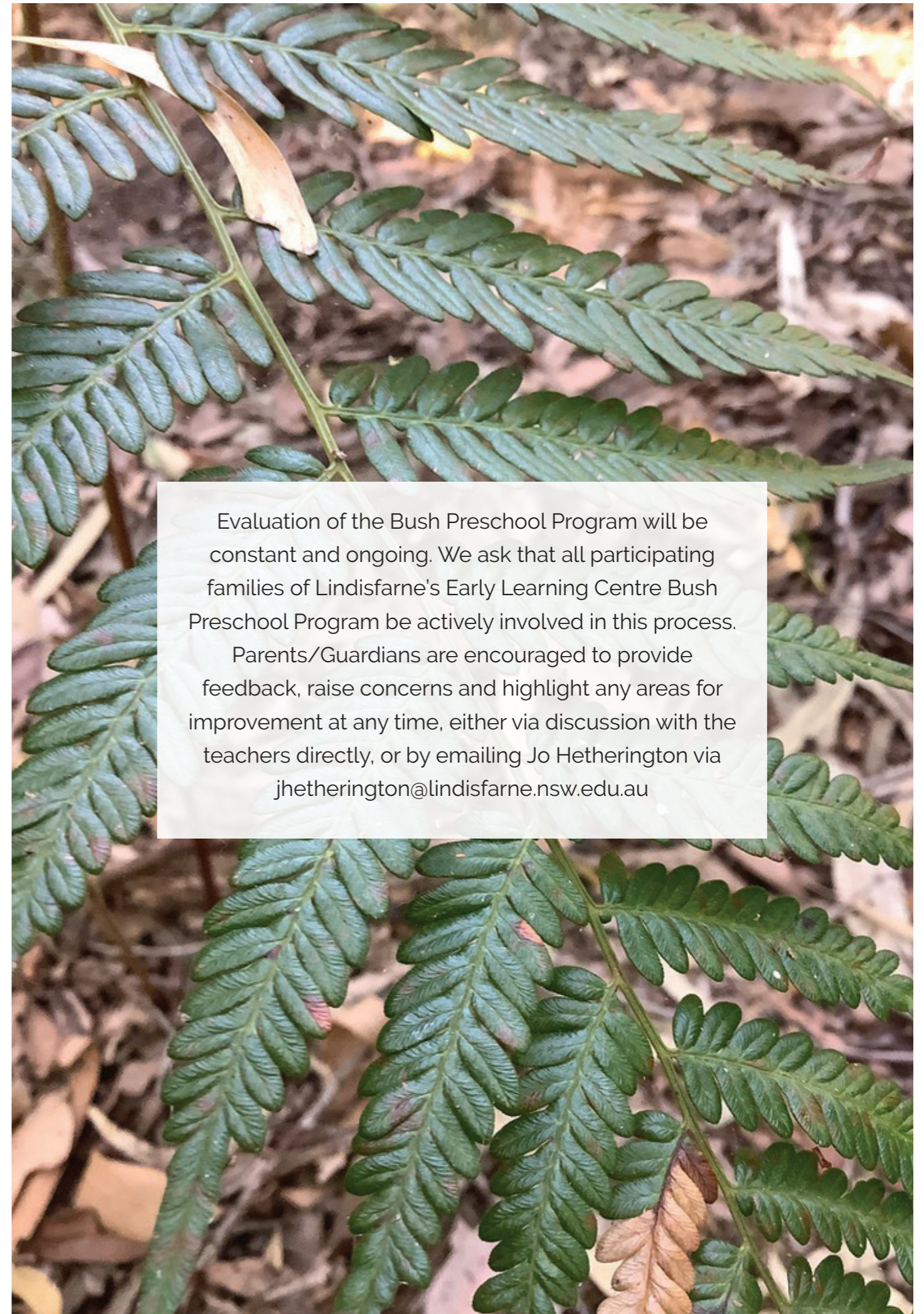
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Dog Awareness
- Emergency Evacuation (Attachments 1&2)
- Extreme Weather
- Identification and visibility
- Protective Clothing
- Snake Awareness & First Aid
- Volunteers and helpers
- Transportation of children



Minjungbal Aboriginal Cultural Centre Site



Fingal Headland & Foreshore Park Site

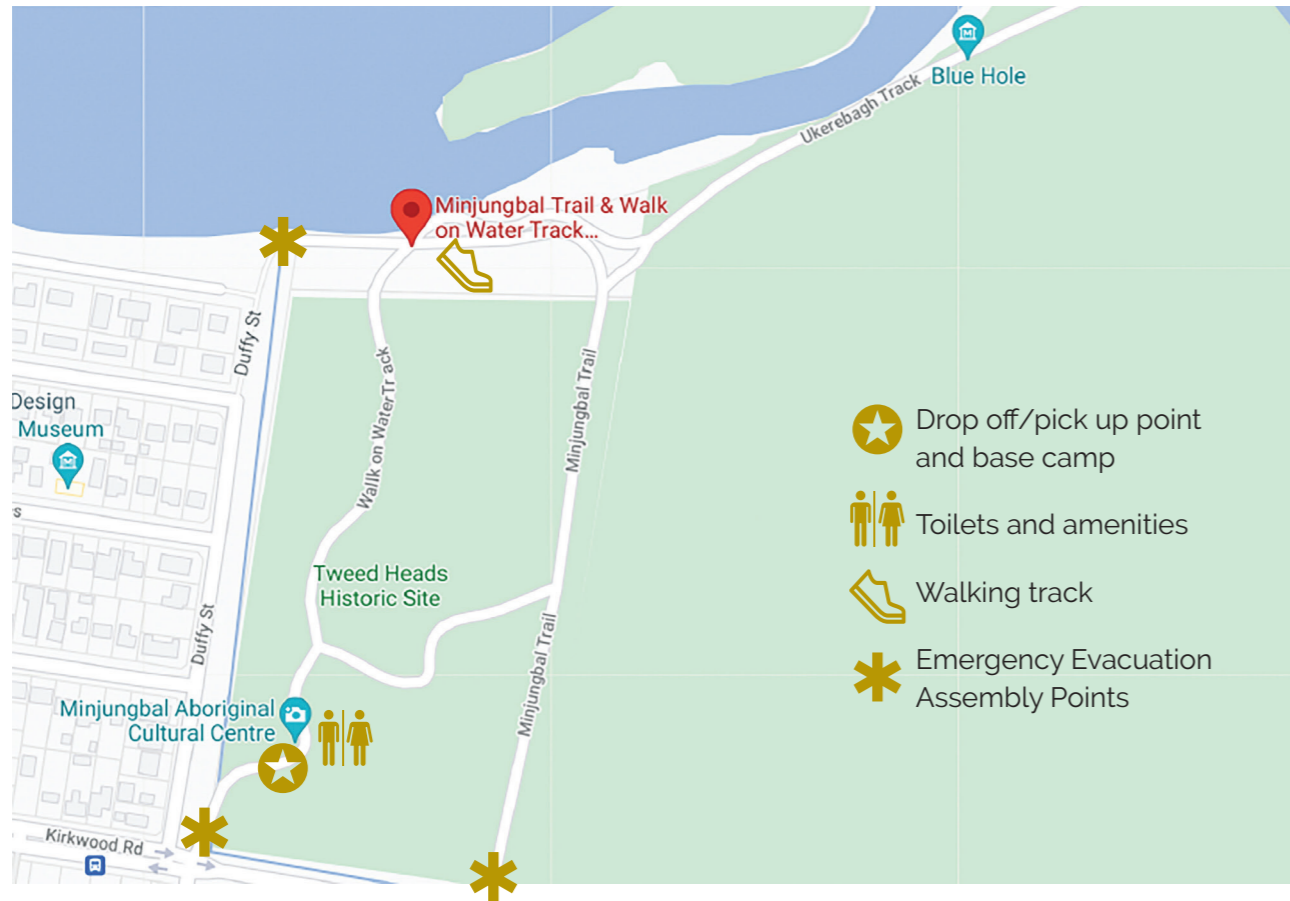


Evaluation of the Bush Preschool Program will be constant and ongoing. We ask that all participating families of Lindisfarne's Early Learning Centre Bush Preschool Program be actively involved in this process.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to provide feedback, raise concerns and highlight any areas for improvement at any time, either via discussion with the teachers directly, or by emailing Jo Hetherington via jhetherington@lindisfarne.nsw.edu.au

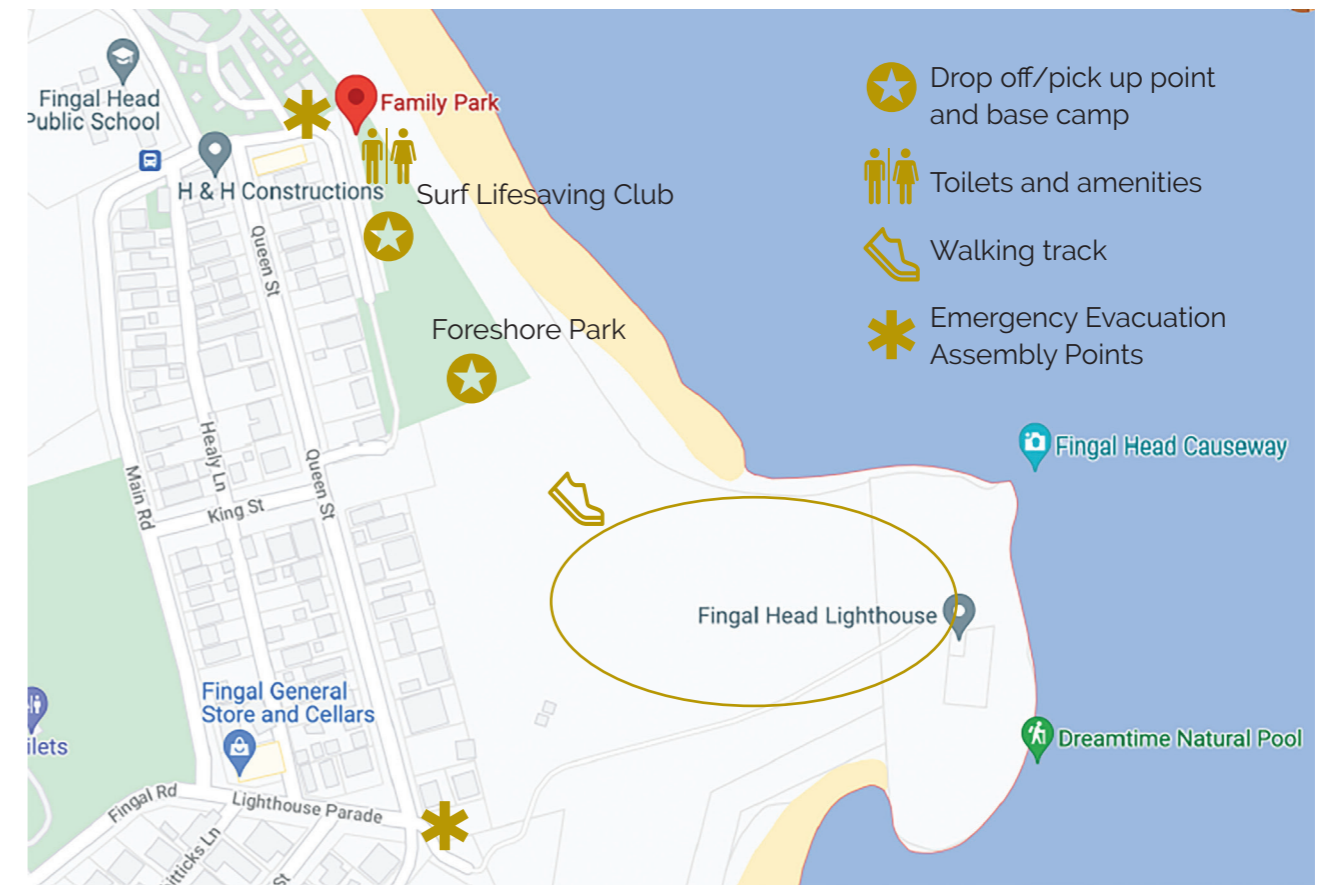
Attachment 1

Minjungbal Bush Preschool Map and Emergency Evacuation Assembly Points



Attachment 2

Fingal Bush Preschool Map and Emergency Evacuation Assembly Points





LINDISFARNE

Anglican Grammar School

Luceat Lux Vestra — Let Your Light Shine

Junior School

Preschool to Year 4
Sunshine Avenue Campus
Tweed Heads South
NSW 2486

Middle and Senior School

Years 5 to 12
Mahers Lane Campus
Terranora
NSW 2486

T: 07 5590 5099

E: reception@lindisfarne.nsw.edu.au

PO Box 996, Banora Point NSW 2486

www.lindisfarne.nsw.edu.au

CRICOS No. 03803G