

Letter to parents – from early childhood service director - for ECD facilities not temporarily relocating

Dear parent / guardian

As you know, the smoke from the fire in the coal mine has become worse. The fire is unlikely to be put out for several weeks, maybe longer.

This is a difficult time for our community - and here at [insert centre name] we are doing what we can to support the children in our care.

Our main concern is - of course - their health and safety.

The Department of Health has advised that exposure to smoke can affect people's health – especially children, older people, pregnant women, smokers and people with asthma or heart disease.

We are currently doing several things to reduce the impact of smoke at our centre.

We have reduced physical activities so children don't get puffed and we are keeping them inside as much as possible. We are making sure surfaces are kept clean from ash and we continue to make sure children wash their hands regularly.

All our windows and doors are closed and our air conditioners are on 'recycle air' or turned off if they cannot recycle air. When there are clearly breaks in the smoke, we try to air out the centre.

In addition to air monitoring by the Environment Protection Authority, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is also monitoring the air at our centre. At this point, there is no reason for concern.

At home, keep an eye on your child's health. If your child shows any signs of smoke irritation, such as itchy eyes, sore throat, runny nose and coughing, please let us know and contact Nurse on Call on 1300 60 60 24.

We will seek immediate medical help for any child with a health problem, as we normally do.

Thank you for continuing to send your child to our centre during this time. It's important that they continue their learning with us and their peers.

Some families may be considering whether to move out of town for a while. If you do, please let us know. It's important we know where your child is and when they are expected to return to us. Please also ensure that we have your up-to-date contact details.

We will provide updates to you as they become available. In the meantime, if you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me on [insert details.]

Yours sincerely,

[insert NAME]

General support

- **Nurse on Call** - 1300 60 60 24 (this is a phone service that allows you to discuss any health related issue with a registered nurse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for the cost of a local call from anywhere in Victoria).
- **EPA Victoria** on 1300 372 842 (24 hours) or visit: www.epa.vic.gov.au
- **Department of Health** - More information on the health effects of smoke, or on the use of water from rainwater tanks contact 1300 761 874 (during business hours) or go to www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/bushfires.htm
- **Asthma Foundation** - www.asthma.org.au or call 1800 278 462
- **Latrobe City Council** - call 1300 367 700 or go to www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/Home
- Victorian Bushfire Information Line: Freecall 1800 240 667. (Callers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech/communication impairment can call via 1800 555 677)
- **VicEmergency** website: www.emergency.vic.gov.au
- **CFA Social Media**: Facebook (facebook.com/cfavic); Twitter (Twitter @ CFA_Updates)