

Westdale Kindergarten flood damage

Fact Sheet

October 2026

Issued 21 October 2026



Message to the community

Dear Westdale Kindergarten families,

As you know, Westdale Kindergarten was badly affected by the storm event on 3 October 2026.

This has impacted staff, children and their families.

We know how much the centre means to your family, and how unsettling the past few weeks have been.

Together, Westdale Kindergarten, Council and the Department of Education are working to get the building safely back in use as soon as possible. Unfortunately, the permanent kindergarten at the WORLD Precinct site will not be available before the end of term four 2026. At the same time, we're working to find short-term arrangements so your children's learning can continue.

The information below explains what has happened, what the kindergarten, Council and Department are doing, and what we're still waiting to find out. You will be kept you informed as we all learn more.

We are working together to make the start of term one 2027 a priority.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we focus on the best outcome for all our kindergarten children and families.

Fiona Weigall

CEO, East Gippsland Shire Council

What we know

The storm flooded the inside of the building, and wastewater got into most of the rooms. This isn't something that can be quickly mopped up and cleaned.

A building used by young children must meet strict health rules before anyone can go back in, and Council and Westdale takes that seriously.

What we've done so far

- **5 October:** Council's carpenters and facilities team carried out an initial assessment of the building. All carpet was removed, and furniture was moved away from the worst-affected areas.
- The damage was too big for Council staff to fully assess or fix themselves, so Council called in the building's insurers.
- Steamatic, a company that specialises in repairing damaged buildings, is leading the clean-up and repairs, with guidance from insurers.
- **20 October:** A health and safety specialist from VA Sciences carried out detailed testing of the building, including checking the air and testing samples of building materials.
- Council, the Department of Education, Emergency Management Victoria and Westdale's Committee of Management have been working together on finding a place where the kindergarten can operate from until the building can be occupied.
- This week, the Department of Education has worked to ensure the Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority meets with Westdale to assess a new site for the rest of this term and this has sped up the approval process.
- Council and Westdale are in regular contact, and we are asking contractors and insurers to act quickly.

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What happens next

- We expect to receive the health and safety specialist's report at the start of November. It will show how much damage there is and what needs to be cleaned and repaired.
- Council puts together a plan of works and timeline showing each step needed before reopening. This will be shared with all involved.
- The clean-up and repairs are completed.
- Council's health officer checks and approves the work and advises the Department of Education that the building meets health requirements. These steps can't be rushed, and children's health comes first.
- Westdale Kindergarten reopens. Temporary kinder arrangements continue until then.

What we don't know

- **A reopening date.** We can't give a definitive timeline until the building report is complete. As soon as a date is known it will be communicated with kindergarten families.
- **Approval of a temporary location.** Any temporary site must be checked and approved by the Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority. This decision is not Council's to make.

What you can do

- Keep an eye on Westdale's usual communication channels for updates.
- Email the Westdale team if you have questions or concerns.

More information

East Gippsland Shire Council

P: (03) 5153 9500

E: feedback@egipps.vic.gov.au

W: eastgippsland.vic.gov.au

Westdale Kindergarten

E: westdale.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au

