

## BHCS Bushfire Preparedness Policy

### PURPOSE

BHCS and is responsible for the well-being and safety of its staff, students and visitors. As the School is located in a high risk bushfire zone, the Bushfire Preparedness Policy ensures that the School is able to implement the necessary emergency procedures should a bushfire occur. The policy further takes into account the safety of its staff and students in relation to bushfires for offsite activities and ensures that the School complies with the measures introduced in relation to the Bushfire At Risk Register (BARR) on which the School appears.

### REFERENCES

To be used in conjunction with the following policies: -

- The Emergency Management Plan
- The Threat Response Booklet
- Tree Management Policy
- Excursion/Camp Risk Management Plans
- Emergency Procedure for visiting schools

### BUILDING COMPLIANCE

As the School is located in a high risk bushfire zone its buildings, facilities and grounds comply with the local laws and regulations that apply to schools including all relevant planning and health and safety laws. This includes:-

- Building compliance with specific Bushfire Attack Level ratings (for shelter-in-place)
- A three metre wide fire track around the School's perimeter for the easy access of emergency vehicles, which also serves as a fire break
- Specialised roof access including anchor points
- A designated bushfire hydrant with dedicated water storage tanks

### IMPLEMENTATION

The School's emergency management plan documents the roles and responsibilities in cases of emergency. This plan is reviewed annually and after any significant event.

The School has in place a regular maintenance schedule for the purposes of ensuring the following: -

- The monitoring and removal of materials that can easily be ignited including branches overhanging buildings, debris and rubbish around buildings and debris in gutters as well as ensuring that dry grass and vegetation is kept at an acceptable height.
- The monitoring of its fire track to ensure safe and easy access for all emergency vehicles should this be necessary
- The monitoring of all building exits to ensure they are kept clear of obstructions
- The safe storage of flammable materials
- The monitoring of all its emergency safety equipment, which falls into two categories.
  - Items such as torches, gloves, safety glasses, ember attack fire extinguishers and other safety equipment is checked and maintained by maintenance staff on a regular basis
  - Further safety equipment is maintained and checked by external organisations and includes fire hoses, fire extinguishers and fire hydrants. In this case, the CFA come in on a 6 monthly basis in order to ensure the equipment is certified and in working order.
- The regular monitoring of first-aid materials and equipment

The School also has in place the following: -

- Designated Assembly Points in case of emergency.
- Regular drills (one per term) for the purposes of training and educating staff and students and identifying any weaknesses that may exist in the procedure. During Term 1 and Term 4 these are whole school drills.
- Staff Inductions
- Annual drills by the CFA on School premises for the purposes of ensuring their familiarity with our property
- Planned information updates to families of information related to the School being on the BARR and what this means
- Emergency evacuation maps indicating exit points and fire safety equipment
- Emergency Procedures for visiting schools
- Strategically placed Emergency Management Plans and Threat Response Booklets for use by staff in case of emergency
- OH&S Meetings that regularly review any areas of concern

#### **ON DAYS OF HIGH AND EXTREME FIRE DANGER - ONSITE**

On days of high fire danger the School will implement the following: -

- Maintain a heightened state of awareness and readiness
- Be prepared to enact its Emergency Management Plan
- Ensure it maintains open lines of communication with the local CFA, complying with their instructions as necessary

#### **ON DAYS OF HIGH AND EXTREME FIRE DANGER - OFFSITE ACTIVITIES**

All camps and excursions require a Risk Management Form/Assessment to have been submitted before they are authorised. These take into account all manner risks including the hazards posed by season, location and weather.

The Principal and/or Deputy Principal will determine whether or not to cancel any activity in cases of high fire danger.

#### **BARR AND CATASTROPHIC DAYS (PREV. CODE RED)**

As we are in a high risk bushfire zone and on the BARR, the School complies with the necessary instructions in relation to Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating Days. The School does not operate on these days and puts in place the following: -

- Notifies School families via email and newsletter at the beginning of the year that the School is on the BARR and what this means
- Notifies parents of the School's closure on Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating Days as soon as the School is made aware by the Department of Education
- Changes the message on the answering machine informing callers of the School's closure due to a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating Day
- Cancels all its bus routes during a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating Day
- Locks the School's gates to prevent access on a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating Day
- Places posters informing of closure due to a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating

#### **FURTHER RESOURCES**

- CFA – [Your Guide to Survival](#)
- CFA – [Fire Ready Kit](#)
- CFA – [Fire Danger Ratings](#)