Elliston Area School

Bushfire Emergency Roles and Responsibilities

Bus Bushfire Procedures

Bushfire Hazards Management Plan

Camps and Excursions Bushfire Procedures

2014 - 2015

Emergency Response Team

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Preparing Elliston Area School for a Bush Fire

- Provide all staff and regular visitors with pre fire season updates during Term 3 each year and instruction about any changes to the contents and requirements of the school Bushfire Action plan during the first two weeks of Term 4 and Term 1.
- Plan appropriate locations for students, staff and community members likely to be using the Refuge building – admin building 1.
- Off school Refuge 2 building will be the Sports Centre adjacent to the oval. Committee verified use.
- No gates have locks for ease of access for staff and students to move to refuge building and for ease of access by CFS vehicles if necessary.

Fire Reported in the District

- Determine if bush fire is reported in pre-determined boundaries of nominated local district eg. Townships and surrounding areas of Mt. Wedge and Sheringa. No bus to run on advice from local CFS of adjacent fires. Students will not be at risk. Contact BEM 82263714 or hotline 1800 000 279 for more information.

Fire in the immediate vicinity or impacting on school

- Make a decision about Refuge building 1 or safe passage to Refuge 2 at the Sports Centre.
- Institute search by staff if persons are unaccounted for after a move to the Refuge building 1.
- Liaise with Emergency Services members at school.
- Prepare persons sheltering in the Refuge building 1 for the arrival and passage of the bush fire front by assisting all to remain calm; checking safety within the building, providing regular information about situation outside, outlining possible actions after front has passed. Ensure all persons are located away from windows and doors. Restrict unnecessary movement. Toilets are located in side the building.
- Adequate water and backup food stored in Sports Centre as Refuge 2.
- Staff remain calm and provide some form of activity to engage students.

Recovery after the front has passed

- Check for and extinguish spot fires inside or impacting on the Refuge building.
- Assess the safety of the area outside the Refuge building before anyone leaves the building.
• Make an assessment and if necessary make the preparations required for extended care of students.
• Check the building for damage and burning embers.
• Determine if there is a need to evacuate the Refuge building.
• Review effectiveness of staff instructions in light of the experience.

Principal

General Information

• Hold discussions with local CFS during Term 3 about bushfire preparedness of the school.
• Forward a copy of the school BAP to the Elliston CFS Brigade by Week 2 of Term 4 each year.
• Explain the BAP to the families of new students during the enrolment process.
• Include bushfire season reminders and information in school newsletters at least three times in each of Term 4 and Term 1.
• Ensure that all staff members, relieving staff and visitors are briefed about the requirements of the BAP during the school induction process.

Preparing Elliston Area School for a Bush Fire

• Develop and review Bush Fire Hazard Management Plans for on school vegetation, District Council vegetation and neighbours vegetation during Term 3.
• Arrange annual inspection of buildings to ensure all openings and cavities in the façade and roofs are sealed.
• Ensure maintenance of high gutters included in Programmed Maintenance plan.
• Ensure areas under timber decking are sealed.
• Ensure all timber and paintwork is well maintained.
• All buildings maintained to an appropriate standard.

Refuge building

• Arrange Emergency Bush Fire drills during the first 2 weeks of Term 4 and Term 1 each year at the flag pole area. Practice entering Refuge 1 and walking to Sports Centre for Refuge 2.
• Advertise alternative pick up points as across the Flinders Highway and vehicle access points to be used after a bush fire as being at the Sports Centre.
• Ensure ‘triggers’ for movement to Refuge building 1 are well understood by students and staff and have been made well known to parents.

Total Fire Ban Days

• Inform students and staff in morning notices.
• Hang notices on front gate

Fire Reported in Local District

• Maintain visual check of surrounding area.
• Inform Port Lincoln District Office of fire reported in the area.
• Liaise with local CFS via mobile phones to obtain up to date information.
• Cancel outdoor student activities.
• Assess if it is safe for students to take outside recess and lunch breaks and inform staff.
• If school bus routes are affected make arrangements for the supervision of students normally on that bus until roads are declared safe.
• Prepare Refuge building 1 for arrival of students.
• Give clear directive about school bus leaving school. Only authorise bus to leave after specific direction from SAPOL or CFS Incident Management re the level of fire risk to students. Cancel bus if there is a lack of clarity.
• Arrange for supervision of any students remaining at school until they are collected by parents.

Fire in Immediate Vicinity or Impacting on School
• Sound agreed alarm or gas powered siren or whistles when ‘triggers’ are reached.
• Turn off air conditioner and close all air vents in Refuge building 1 as the bush fire front approaches.
• Make a decision about Refuge building 1 or safe passage to Refuge 2 at the Sports Centre.
• Ensure all school personnel are accounted for in the Refuge.
• Advise Port Lincoln District Office of ‘triggers’ reached, number of students, staff and community members on school, Emergency Services assistance immediately available.

Recovery after the front has passed
• Ensure no one leaves the Refuge until situation has been assessed as safe.
• Liaise with Emergency Services on school as soon as possible.
• Advise Port Lincoln District Office of current situation.
• Refer media enquiries to Education Director.
• At an appropriate time after the incident, lead a debrief of the bush fire emergency situation and procedures undertaken at the time.
• Seek support for students and staff from counsellors and social workers.
• Arrange to have fire fighting systems checked and readied again for use.
• Arrange to have appropriate authorities assess safety of school buildings.
• Contact BEM re Corporate Emergency Response Team for support with staff and or student trauma and distress.

General Information
• Ensure that emergency bushfire drills are carried out by students and staff during the first 2 weeks of Term 4 and Term 1 each year.

Total Fire Ban Day
• Inform students and staff of Total Fire Ban Day in morning notices.
• Display notices on Front gate

Fire Reported in Local District
• Maintain visual check of surrounding area when fire reported in district.
• Assess if it is safe for students to take outside recess and lunch breaks and inform staff.
• Assess if it is safe to release students from school at normal time.
• Prepare Refuge building 1 for arrival of students.
• Open and prepare off school Refuge 2 at Sports Centre for arrival of students.
• Liaise with SAPOL, school bus driver to determine any impact on bus route in area of reported fire.
• Supervise any students remaining at school after hours. Spare clothing is available at the school and if necessary, bedding will be sought from local residents, given a risk appraisal relating to safe access outside Refuge building 1.

Fire in Immediate Vicinity or impacting on school
• Sound agreed alarm or gas powered siren or whistles when ‘triggers’ are reached.
• Ensure that students and staff from other schools are accommodated appropriately in the Refuge building 1.
• Ensure that members of the local community are accommodated appropriately in the Refuge building 1.

**Front Office SSO**

**General Information**

• Forward a copy of the Bush Fire Action Plan to all families of students on school at the beginning of Term 1 each year.
• Monitor local ABC radio for CFS Bushfire Information and warning messages. Also cfs.sa.gov.au website for warnings and messages and other media.
• Purchase pressure pack siren.
• Assemble Emergency kit.

**Refuge building**

• List and assemble student and staff medications to take to Refuge building 1.

**Total Fire Ban Day**

• Update student and staff medication list and prepare medication for transportation to Refuge building 1.

**Fire Reported in Local District**

• Monitor local UHF radio network when fire reported in local district.
• Place Emergency supply kit in Refuge building 1.
• Record names of students collected during the day.
• Back up all computer records – make sure copies are held off school grounds.
• Alert visitors and volunteers of situation and actions to take if move to Refuge building 1 is signalled.

**Fire in Immediate Vicinity or Impacting on School**

• Monitor register of visitors and volunteers on school and report to Principal.

**Recovery after the Front has passed**

• Record names of students and persons collecting them as they leave the school.
• Replenish the Emergency kit.

**SSO**

**General Information**

• Monitor local ABC radio, CFS website for CFS Bushfire Information and warnings messages.
• Check Emergency supplies kit every three months.
• Check the contents of the Refuge building 1 first aid kit at start of each term.

**Total Fire Ban Day**

• Ensure students rolls and visitor registers are up to date.

**Fire Reported in local District**

• Turn off all external gas cylinders.
• Ensure pressure pack siren ready for use.

**Fire in Immediate Vicinity or Impacting on School**

• Inform parents via telephone /mobile phone register that students are in Refuge building 1. Safety Mobile phones have all family numbers listed ready for local call or SMS. Mobile phones have fully charged back up batteries available.

**Recovery after the front has passed**

• Check for and treat injuries.
All Staff Members

General Information

- Undertake pre fire updates during Term 3 and receive ongoing information and instructions about the contents and requirements of the BAP during Term 4 and Term 1 staff meetings.
- Undertake allocated roles and responsibilities.
- Undertake instruction in the operation of bushfire pumps, sprinklers and grounds irrigation systems – check operating instruction guide adjacent to system - during the first two weeks of Term 4 and Term 1 each year.

Total Fire Ban Days

- All off school meetings or training and development for staff will be cancelled.
- All camps and excursions will be risk assessed.
- Remind all students of bush fire emergency drills and procedures on Total Fire Ban Days.
- Monitor weather conditions during breaks and outdoor sessions.
- Park private vehicles and bicycles at Sports Centre or across the Flinders Highway away from school grounds and trees on Total Fire Ban Days.
- Ensure hazards are removed from passages and walkways.

Fire Reported in the District

- Record names of students collected during the day
- Encourage students to keep water bottles filled, personal belongings handy and to use the toilet as required.

Fire Immediate Vicinity or Impacting on School

- Aware of ‘triggers’ and signal for move to Refuge building 1.
- Close all classroom doors and windows and turn off air conditioners on leaving.
- Check student roll when seated in Refuge building 1 and report to Principal.
- Prepare for unexpected toileting of students.

Recovery after the front has passed

- Family members can pick their children up at the Refuge building 1 when all clear is given. Duty of care is passed to parent - caregivers when they arrive at school. Supervision will be provided for remaining students until family members arrive to pick the students up.

Teachers

- Monitor local ABC radio and CFS website for CFS Bushfire Information and Advice Message, watch and act messages and emergency warnings.
- Put out Total Fire Ban signs at gateways on days of extreme fire danger.
- Check pumps, sprinkler systems and grounds irrigation are operating correctly and hoses fitted.
- Turn on bush fire sprinkler and grounds irrigation systems hourly if a fire is reported in the district.
- Supervise students remaining in school if school bus unable to leave.
- Turn on bush fire sprinkler and grounds irrigation systems after students safely in Refuge building 1.
- Remain on duty to supervise students for an extended period of time.
- Extinguish small fire in or near the Refuge building 1.

Grounds Persons

- Undertake regular inspections of vegetation around buildings and maintain as required.
- Inspect vegetation around buildings with Principal in Term 3 each year.
- Clean low level gutters in November through to March monthly.
- Test and run sprinklers, pumps and grounds irrigation systems weekly during Term 4 and Term 1.
- Ensure walkway to Refuge 2 – Sports Centre is clear and mowed regularly, safe for walking

**Bush Fire Hazards Management Plan**

**General Vegetation**

During Term 3 the Principal will meet with Grounds staff and conduct an inspection of school vegetation. They will review and assess potential bush fire hazards around the school with relation to the vegetation guidelines provided.

- All grass and shrubs more than 10cm in height and growing within 20 metres of buildings around the school have been removed.
- Tall trees within 20 metres of buildings have been trimmed of branches up to a height of 2 metres.
- Overhanging tree branches have been trimmed to a distance of 2 metres from building rooflines.

They will determine action required to meet the guidelines.

- Trimming, cutting back and removal of trees, slashing of undergrowth, mowing of grassed areas, spraying and fire break maintenance in conjunction with Elliston District Council.

They will consider if the Grounds persons can carry out the necessary actions or employ subcontractors to carry out the necessary preparations with reference to the DECD tree audit information.

**‘Nature Trail’**

During Term 3 the Principal will meet with Grounds Staff and conduct an inspection of school vegetation in the Nature Trail.

- The Nature Trail is in the northwest corner of the school grounds. This trail has many native trees, shrubs and endangered species within it.
- If a bushfire occurred it may impact on the school or neighbouring properties.
- The Grounds person will undertake regular inspections and maintain required clearances during the year. This will include mowing the trail, whipper snipping undergrowth, spraying and slashing.
- The Grounds person, in conjunction with District Council of Elliston will also maintain a fire break between the Nature Trail and the boundary fences.

**Elliston Area School Bus Bushfire procedures 2014 / 2015**

**On days of forecast catastrophic fire danger rating:**

- Our R2 bushfire risk rated school and preschool in the affected Fire Ban Districts will be closed.

- Regardless of the bushfire risk rating of the school, all school bus routes travelling through the affected Fire Ban District(s) will be cancelled.

- If the Fire Ban rating changes to ‘Catastrophic’ during the day, school bus will operate as normal, unless advised otherwise by the State Emergency Services (SES) or BEM.
If a bushfire is reported in the area during the day:

- The Principal will contact their education Director for advice regarding accessibility of roads travelled by school bus.

- Affected bus runs are not to leave the school until the roads are declared safe by emergency services authorities

- Parents will be notified and students will be supervised at school, until bus can run, or until parents are able to collect their children.

Ensure all bus drivers (including replacements) have been advised of the following information:

If, during a bus run, the bus driver sights a bushfire and there is a concern that it may affect the route ahead, then the bus driver:

- Has the authority to abandon the bus run and return to school, or

- If safer to do so, drive to one of the pre-planned emergency areas and activate the emergency bus procedure

- Must contact the school by mobile phone or UHF radio and advise the Principal of the decision taken.

If the bus is overtaken by a fire and threatened by flame, ash, embers or thick smoke the driver should:

- Stop the bus in a safe location in the middle of the road, in an open area with no overhanging trees and as little road side vegetation as possible, ensure lights and hazard lights are turned on, close all windows and air vents, turn off the air conditioner and leave the engine running

- Instruct students to get down as low as possible on the floor away from windows and cover their heads

- When safe to do so, contact the school to advise the Principal of the situation.

Once the fire front has passed, and it is safe to do so, the driver:

- Can check the bus for any damage and use the extinguisher to put out any smouldering embers to enable the bus to safely travel away from the fire. Under no circumstances will the bus driver/passengers put themselves at risk to protect/save property (i.e. the bus). The safety of the bus driver and passengers is paramount

- Must decide whether it is safe to move the students off the bus to a safer spot away (i.e.) from burning trees or to drive away from the fire

- Is to contact the school to advise the Principal of the current situation.

Excursions and Camps to fire ban districts

Camp or excursion planning must take careful account of contingency procedures during times of bushfire danger. Teachers should avoid planning camps or excursions in high bushfire danger areas during summer, particularly in the period December–March, in favour of safer venues or times.

If a bushfire is burning prior to departure and is likely to threaten the intended campsite, then the excursion/camp will not go ahead. It will be cancelled.
The following procedures that must be adopted if camps and excursions are conducted in bushfire prone areas, in advance:

- Inform the nearest Country Fire Service (CFS) or Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) station of the dates the group will be in the area.
- Discuss the itinerary with local schools or authorities and become familiar with their bushfire contingency plans.
- Identify nearby safe bushfire refuge locations, including those at the campsite, nearby schools and CFS Refuges of Last Resort.
- Be aware of the needs of those participants for whom a fire can precipitate special first aid needs, e.g. smoke acting as an asthma trigger.
- Inform parents of the procedures the school will adopt on a day of extreme fire danger or in the event of a fire. This should be done when parental consent is sought for the proposed camp or excursion.

Prior to and on arrival

- Give instructions to all participants about fire precautions, restrictions on the lighting of camp fires in the open, total fire bans in national parks, procedures in the event of a fire and the location of fire fighting appliances.
- Include in the fire precautions a prearranged fire alarm signal, and instruct participants to report to the teacher-in-charge at the camp's predetermined safe area immediately on hearing the alarm.
- Use a battery-powered radio to listen to local bushfire warnings and advice from the fire authorities. Checks can be made with the CFS 24-hour information hotline — toll free call: 1300 362 361.

Fire danger days

Staff will take the following action on days of extreme fire danger which are days of total fire ban in the district, or when a fire is burning in the area.

- Cancel trips into bushfire-prone areas.
- If already on camp, maintain close contact with the local CFS, particularly if a fire is burning in the area.
- If this stage is reached, be prepared for advice from an authorised emergency services officer to evacuate to a safe area.

Local authorities

Where a camp or excursion is:
- to a national park reserve
- an adventure activity in a high fire risk area more than 30 minutes from medical help
- in a high fire risk area
- in a remote or isolated area

The itinerary and other pertinent details should also be left with one or more of the following:
- park authority - Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources
- local police
- local fire authority

**Emergency services**
For incidents requiring search or rescue, the police will coordinate the response and should be immediately contacted by the group, the school contact person or both. Emergency services can respond most effectively when they have accurate knowledge of the location and the nature of the group they are dealing with. The school contact person acts as liaison.
The activation of all emergency services is carried out by calling 000 (or by calling 112 from a mobile phone).

**Accurate and current knowledge is important. If a party diverges from an itinerary lodged with relevant authorities, the swiftness of an emergency services response can be seriously compromised.**

**TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS ACROSS THE FIRE BAN DISTRICT**

If the Bureau of Meteorology and the Country Fire Service issue a forecast of *catastrophic (Code Red)* bushfire weather conditions within the Fire Ban District, the **Elliston Area School will be closed and the Sheringa Bramfield school bus cancelled.**
Pamphlets and newsletters outlining the DECD school closure policy on days of catastrophic bushfire weather conditions have been distributed to parents and caregivers. Where possible, the Education Director will distribute information about the potential for closure on the day before the forecast period.
Staff should **prepare** to advise all parents and care givers about the closure and cancellation of bus routes by telephone and by follow-up written notification.
The Education Director will confirm decision by the Chief Executive to close Elliston Area School and cancel school bus routes within the Fire Ban District for a period as determined by emergency services.
Staff will **contact** all parents and school bus operators, by telephone, to inform them of the decision. A letter will be provided with key messages to parents and care givers.
- The letter will provide parents and caregivers with an emergency hotline telephone number and a web address to obtain closure and reopening details about Elliston Area School.
- Parents and care givers will also be reminded to listen to local ABC radio or check CFS website for further warnings and advice messages.