

## CHIDLOW PRIMARY SCHOOL BUSHFIRE PLAN (2016/2017)

### Introduction

This plan is for the Chidlow Primary School and has been designed to assist staff in the event of a total fire ban, catastrophic fire danger rating, or a bushfire. Letters to staff and parents are included in the appendix as well as notices regarding the plans of closures of the school. Chidlow Primary School is a lovely rural school, surrounded by Jarrah and Marri forests thirteen kilometres east of the Mundaring township and three kilometres from Lake Leschenaultia. This is a very tranquil setting, being on the outskirts of the town and backing onto an A class reserve. The school is located fifty five kilometres east of Perth, just off Great Eastern Highway.

### Overview

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

This Bushfire Plan (BP) has been developed during Term Three after consultation with:

- families of students attending the School
- members of the emergency services (e.g. DFES, Local Emergency Management Committee and/or Community Emergency Services Manager)

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The BP is to be reviewed each year to reflect any changes that may have taken place in:

- Department of Education or government policy
- site facilities
- Personnel normally on site.

The BP outlines required actions to prepare Chidlow school before the bushfire season as per the *Principal's Guide To Bushfire*.

The BP also outlines activities to be undertaken by staff and students at the different levels of a bushfire emergency:

- on days of Total Fire Ban
- Catastrophic 'Code Red'
- when there is a fire in the local district
- when a bushfire is threatening or impacting on the site
- during the period immediately after a bushfire has impacted on the site (known as the 'Recovery Phase').

The Arts/Science Centre is nominated as the **Safer Location** building for Chidlow school.

- It has been prepared for a bushfire emergency and will safely accommodate all persons normally at the school.

#### Distribution

The Principal will forward a copy of the site BP to the Regional Executive Director to be held in the regional office

The Principal or delegated officer will forward a copy of the site BP to the emergency services by Week Two of Term Three each year.

The Principal or delegated officer will forward a copy of the BP to all families of students of Chidlow Primary at the beginning of Term One each year.

- The BP will be given to the families of new students by the Principal or delegated officer during the enrolment process.
- The Principal will ensure that all new staff members, relieving staff and visitors are briefed about the requirements of the BP during the Chidlow Primary induction process.

The Principal will include bushfire season reminders and information in the Chidlow Primary newsletters when applicable. The School's Information Booklet, updated each year, will include detailed information about actions and procedures included in the BP.

All staff members receive pre fire season updates during Term Three and ongoing information and instruction about the contents and requirements of the BP during Term Four and Term One staff meetings.

### ***Bushfire Preparation checklist (need to refer to Appendix 1)***

**The safety and wellbeing of students, staff and visitors is at all times Chidlow Primary and the Department's main priority. Staff are not expected to fight bushfires.**

Chidlow school is to review (and update where appropriate) the plan on an annual basis and submit the up to date version of this plan to the Regional Executive Director's Office in Term Three.

In this regard, any bushfire advice received by the school from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC), Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) or external experts needs to be documented identifying the date and source of the advice.

Date of Review	Reviewing Officer	Date Submitted	Next scheduled Review

## **Communication**

There are several levels of communication requirements at school level before, during and after bushfire events.

### ***Preparing for Bushfire Season***

- The Principal must ensure all students and staff are aware of Chidlow School's bushfire response plan, including relief staff and parents.
- The Principal should establish contact with emergency services, including DFES, the local volunteer fire brigade, WA Police, the LEMC and CESM.
- Chidlow School, which is located in bushfire prone area, will incorporate key bushfire messages in it's curriculum.
- Communication plans (including emergency contacts and a telephone tree) need to be in place for evacuation or planned closure.
- Chidlow School has an effectively working emergency warning or alert system and emergency communication equipment is available and working.
- Chidlow School has in place systems to account for students, staff and visitors in an emergency, such as emergency evacuation class list and visitor registers.
- Arrangements are in place in relation to school buses if appropriate (notification of contractors if pre-emptive closure is invoked; the availability of buses if off-site evacuation is required).

### ***Pre-emptive Closure***

- The DOE Incident Controller (normally the Deputy Director General, Schools or delegated officer) will make the decision to close Chidlow School based upon advice from

Emergency Services and this will be relayed to the Principal via the Regional Executive Director.

- The Principal is to notify staff and parents using SMS, emergency contacts and the telephone tree of closure
- All other necessary parties are advised including other schools that may have siblings at Chidlow School, community kindergartens and Parents and Citizens Association (P & C).
- If appropriate, bus contractors will be contacted to arrange for the evacuation of students to a designated area.
- Notice of Planned Temporary School Closure should be posted both physically at the school and via SMS or email.

### ***During Evacuation***

- Chidlow School will contact their Regional Executive Director and the Department's Media Unit.
- The school, through the registrar will contact parents via SMS, phone or email.
- The school will notify bus contractors and out of school programs.
- The school has landlines (95724132) and one school mobile phone (0400903903). It would be preferable that parents restrict calling the school at this time to emergency calls only.
- The official broadcaster of Emergency Events is ABC radio. Our local station is ABC local radio. They will provide up to date information during a bushfire event in our area.
- The DFES website provides up to date information on fire events. Refer to <http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/>.

NOTE: DFES are introducing the national Emergency Alert system to send community warning messages via mobile telephones in affected areas. (Information can be obtained from <http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/pages/default.aspx>).

The Principal communicates directly with Regional and Central Office personnel including any media communications. Staff should not comment directly to media.

### ***Reopening the School***

- The Regional Executive Director is to advise the Principal when the school can re-open.
- Parents should be informed when the school is reopened. In the event of a pre-emptive closure details are contained in the template letter (*Principal's Guide to Bushfires advising of pre-emptive Closure- Appendix A7*).
- The Notice of Planned Temporary School Closure should be physically removed from the school premises and website.
- All parties that were advised of closure (e.g. Bus Contractors, other schools, P&C) should be advised of reopening.

## **TYPES OF FIRE EVENT**

In the event of a Total Fire Ban, catastrophic weather warning, or bushfire, the **Bushfire Plan** will be activated.

### ***1. Total Fire Ban***

In the event of being notified of a Total Fire Ban through District Office, the **Bushfire Plan** will be invoked

The gardener will be advised that:

- 'hot work' such as metal work, grinding, welding, soldering, gas cutting or similar is not allowed and
- Must not undertake any other activities that may start a fire.
- Grass trimmers or lawn mowers should not be used

It is also necessary to ensure:

- The equipment or machinery is mechanically sound.
- All reasonable precautions are taken to prevent a bushfire starting.

## 2. Catastrophic Fire Danger

The Catastrophic Fire Danger Index (FDR) has been added to the Australia-wide FDR system since the 2009 bushfires in Victoria. If a fire starts in catastrophic conditions, its impact potential includes death or injury to people and destruction of buildings.

Category	Fire Danger Index (FDR)	Action
Catastrophic	100+	Schools on Bushfire Zone Register closed on instruction from Deputy Director General Schools, through Regional Executive Director. School to invoke communication plan and cancel bus services.
Extreme	75-99	Monitor DFES website
Severe	50-74	Monitor DFES website
Very High	32-49	Normal school operations
High	12-31	Normal school operations
Low-Moderate	0-11	Normal school operations

In the event of a catastrophic weather warning the **Bushfire Plan** will be invoked.

### 2.1 Planned Pre-emptive Closure

Regional Executive Directors will contact Principals of affected schools directly when a planned (pre-emptive) closure is to be invoked in a particular part of the State. The lead time for a planned closure varies depending on weather patterns, but every attempt is made to give Principals as much notice as possible to prepare written documentation for parents. Schools should have telephone trees in place to provide this information at short notice or after hours.

Once advised that Chidlow School is to undertake pre-emptive closure, the Principal will notify the school community that a closure is imminent. The Principal needs to send letters to parents and provide each staff member with a memo that clearly states when the closure is planned to occur and that the school is on standby. It may be that between declaration of the closure and the day of closure, weather conditions improve sufficiently to remove the need to close and the school can therefore stand down its pre-emptive closure plans. Your Regional Executive Director confirms with the Principal the final decision to close the school no later than 4.30 pm the day before the planned closure. If weather conditions become less severe after 4:30 pm, the closure goes ahead regardless, in order to provide a level of certainty to parents.

The DEFS is the final authority on advice about which schools are in danger and the level of risk at the time. The Deputy Director General, Schools makes the final decision as to whether or not a planned closure of public schools is to proceed, based on DFES's advice.

### 2.2 During a Planned Closure

The Principal must stay informed of current fire danger rating and any fire activity by monitoring local media (local radio, especially the ABC, and television) and by regularly checking for updates with DFES.

### 2.3 Re-opening School

Parents need to know when the Catastrophic FDR has been downgraded and that it is therefore safe for their children to return to school after a planned closure. The template letter

to parents contains advice on how parents can monitor the situation. The school will place a notice at the school, advise parents via SMS or email and provide a contact number to call.

### **3. Bushfire**

In the event of a bushfire notification from DEFS, the shire, community or a direct threat to the school, the school will notify DFES and the Chidlow Primary **Bushfire Plan** will be invoked by way of the continuous sounding of the school siren (or hand held siren) and via PA Message.

#### **3.1. Bushfire- Watch community**

During a bushfire, Emergency Services provide as much information as possible through a number of different channels. There are three levels of warning, **ADVICE, WATCH AND ACT, EMERGENCY WARNING** and **ALL CLEAR**. These change to reflect the increasing risk to life and the decreasing amount of time you have until the fire arrives, and once the threat has passed.



##### **3.1.1 Advice**

If the school is likely to be threatened by the fire, activate the Emergency Management Plan immediately. Notify DFES Communication Centre of your decision and relocation point.

An ADVICE provides you with information on a bushfire that is not threatening lives or property but may be causing smoke near the school. Turn off evaporative air conditioners. Regular checks of the school are to be undertaken paying special attention to the evaporative air conditioners.



##### **3.1.2 Watch and Act**

A WATCH AND ACT message tells you the fire conditions are changing and there is a possible threat to lives and the school. The Principal's decision to leave or relocate students, staff and visitors off site should be based upon assessment of known information and current circumstances, including advice from emergency services or observations at the time of the event. At this stage local bus contractors will be contacted to have available buses ready to help in the evacuation of the school. Parents will be contacted by SMS and District Office, DEFS, Education Department's Media Centre by telephone of the decision to evacuate. A school liaison person will be deployed to the Incident Control Centre to communicate to the school updated information.



##### **3.1.3 Emergency Warning**

An EMERGENCY WARNING is the highest level of warning and tells you of immediate danger. In some circumstances it may start with a siren sound called the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) to get your attention as the fire is about to arrive. SEWS is a distinctive sound that is broadcast immediately prior to major emergency announcements on radio, television and other communication systems. SEWS tells people 'you need to listen-there is an emergency in your area and you need to take action now'. It is used like a siren and is strictly controlled for use by an authorised hazard management agency only.

Chidlow School should activate their Bushfire Plan in regards to evacuation. Consideration will include; location of fire and ability to travel safely to the selected relocation point, notify DFES Communication Centre of your decision and relocation point. The Principal is to liaise with the Regional Executive Director. **If it is not safe to evacuate, direct all students, staff and visitors to the school's Arts/Science Centre.**

### 3.1.4 All Clear

An ALL CLEAR will be given when the school environment is safe for teachers and students to return to class.

An ALL CLEAR is issued when the threat has passed and the fire is under control. Fire-fighters will still be working to put the last bits of the fire out and making the area safe, so it's important to remain vigilant in case the situation changes. It may still not be safe to leave school to return home. Emergency services will advise when you can go home.

## 3.2. Bushfire- Act

### 3.2.1 Response when a bushfire starts and the school is open

#### 3.2.1.1 Evacuation Procedure

School to evacuate off-site on advice from DFES

**Depending on the safest evacuation route, students will be evacuated by bus to Mundaring PS (15 minutes away) or Gidgegannup PS (20 minutes away)**

- All classes remain with their teachers and allocated education assistants.
- All other staff and visitors report to the Front Office.
- Teachers account for each child and identify students and support staff with known respiratory conditions.
- Doors and windows must be closed and **evaporative air coolers turned off**.
- Students and staff are to remain in classrooms unless directed otherwise by their fire warden.
- Fire wardens are designated to manage evacuation routes, liaise with staff.
- The Principal and fire wardens, will control this response until the arrival of DFES or emergency services who will then take over.
- Students and adults with known respiratory conditions will be identified and given special consideration.

#### Parent Access

Parents will be informed when and where to pick up students upon advice from the school or through DFES or Incident Controller.

#### 3.2.1.2 Safer Location Procedure – if evacuation is not possible

School to remain on site on advice from DFES.

- All classes remain with their teachers and allocated education assistants.
- All classes to be relocated to **Arts/Science Centre**.
- Before leaving classroom doors and windows must be closed and **evaporative air coolers fan turned off and leave 'cool' on**.
- All other staff and visitors report to the Safer Location (**Arts/Science Centre**).
- Teachers account for each child and identify students and staff with known respiratory conditions who will be given special consideration.
- Students and staff are to remain in Arts/Science Centre unless directed otherwise by their Principal/ fire warden.
- Fire wardens are designated to manage evacuation routes and liaise with staff.
- The Principal and fire wardens, will control this response until the arrival of the DFES or emergency services who will then take over.

### **Parent Access**

Parents advised **NOT** to pick up students and to monitor local media for specific access information.

### **3.2.2 Response when a bushfire starts and the school is closed**

If the DOE Incident Controller makes a decision on school closure based upon advice from Emergency Services the Regional Executive Director will inform the Principal of closure.

The Principal is to notify staff and parents using the emergency contact list of closure.

The Department of Education Incident Controller will, in consultation with the Regional Executive Director identify alternative accommodation of students and staff if required. The Department's Media Unit will utilise media outlets to make public announcements of school closures, temporary alternative accommodation and contact number(s) for further information.

The Department's Incident Controller in consultation with DFES will inform the Regional Executive Director when the school can reopen, who will inform the Principal accordingly.

### **3.2.3 Recovery**

The priorities for the school during recovery are

1. Health and Safety of individuals;
2. Social Recovery;
3. Physical (Structural) Recovery.

### **General**

- When possible, return to normal routine.
- Attend to staff and student welfare, considering counselling support.
- Provide information for families and the community of any impact (including if there is none) on the school and school routine following the bushfire.
- Undertake a check of any equipment or stock used and arrange replacement/replenishment.
- Address any physical damage to the school, isolating areas if required and if necessary relocate to alternative accommodation. Contact Building Management and Works to commence repairs. The Department should be advised of any damage caused by the bushfire.
- Attend to security if necessary (Contact Head of Security at Central Office on 9264 4825).
- Manage Administrative details including insurance.

### **Debrief**

- What worked, what didn't?
- Was anything overlooked?
- What could you do better next time?
- Should roles change?
- If changes are made, incorporate them into the formal plan and advise the appropriate parties including staff and other authorities.
- Share the knowledge with other schools.
- Test the revised bushfire management plan and procedures.

## APPENDICIES

### 1. COMPLIANCE: Bushfire Preparation Checklist

	<b>Department of Education</b>	Bushfire Preparation Check List for the Summer Months
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**Principals should be thoroughly familiar with their current plans for dealing with bushfires.**

**All staff members should be aware of their responsibilities in accordance with the plans.**

#### MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Tick when task has been completed, or write NA if not applicable(✓)

#### Evidence

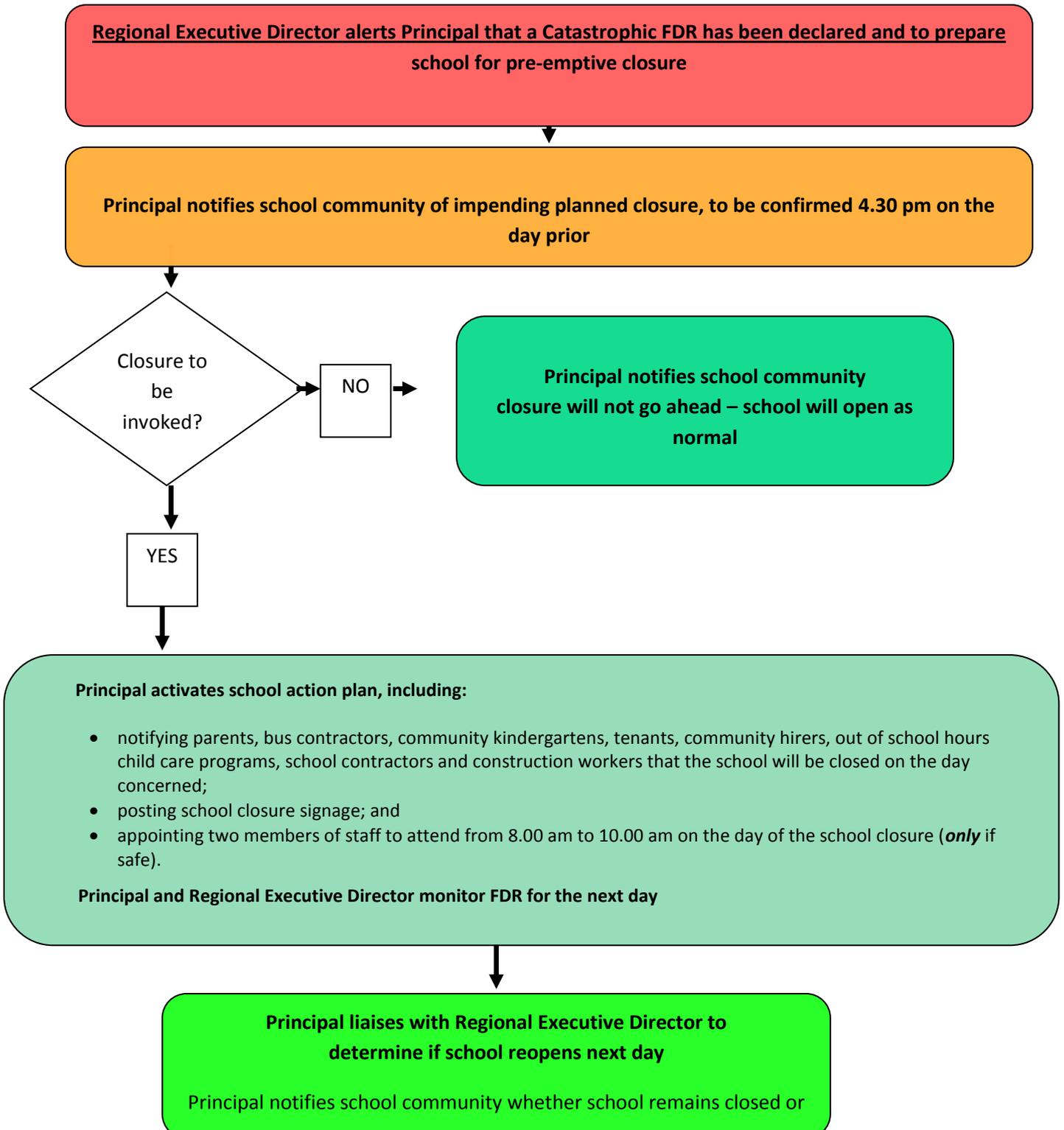
<p>The School <i>Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan</i> includes a plan for dealing with bushfires.</p> <p><b>Schools on the Bushfire Zone Register must also have a separate stand-alone bushfire plan.</b></p>	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students, staff, relief staff and parents/carers have been made aware of the school bushfire plan.</li> <li>• The bushfire plan must be reviewed prior to each bushfire season (Term 3) and a copy forwarded to your education regional office.</li> </ul>	✓	<i>Staff Newsletter 10/10/16 and 24/10/16</i> <i>Staff meeting 1/11/16</i> <i>Newsletter sent to parents/carers with bushfire information 15/09/16 and 27/10/16</i> <i>Plan reviewed 24/10/16</i> <i>Sent to ERO 28/10/16</i>
<p>If school is on the Bushfire Zone Register, the principal (or a nominated staff member) has established contact with emergency services, including DFES, the local volunteer fire brigade, WA Police, your Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) or Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) and incorporated their feedback into the plans (as required) .</p>	✓	<i>Regular updates from Shire at Principal's Forum 24/10/16</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to Emergency Alert warning system (<a href="http://www.emergencyalert.gov.au/">www.emergencyalert.gov.au/</a>) Emergency Services must be informed of your nominated Safer Location as part of your <i>Emergency Critical Incident Management Plan procedures</i>.</li> </ul>	✓	<i>Done at review 05/06/14</i>
<p>Schools on the Bushfire Zone Register need to incorporate key bushfire messages in their curriculum.</p>	✓	<i>Teachers reminded in staff newsletter 24/10/16 and at staff meeting 1/11/16</i>
<p><b>Evaporative air conditioners – awareness of location of the switches and how to switch off the units.</b></p>	✓	<i>Located on all air conditioning switches</i>
<p>Communication plans (include telephone tree – see Appendix D1) are in place for evacuation or planned closure.</p>	✓	<i>Updated `27/10/16</i>
<p>Practice evacuation drills prior to October and at least once per term during the bushfire season, October to March. Note this is a minimum three drills per year.</p>	✓	<i>Drill before Bushfire season 22/09/16 and Fire drill 28/10/16</i>
<p>School has a correctly functioning emergency warning or alert system.</p>	✓	
<p>Emergency communications equipment is available e.g. mobile telephones, hand-operated fire alarm (portable siren), portable radios and spare batteries.</p>	✓	<i>In Registrar's office</i>

Class rolls and visitor register (or equivalent) are readily accessible in an emergency to account for students, staff and visitors.	✓	Updated 10/10/16
First aid equipment is available and staff members trained in first aid have been identified.	✓	
Evacuation kit should be checked at least once per term.	✓	Checked 27/10/16
Arrangements are in place in relation to school buses (notification of contractors if pre-emptive closure is invoked; availability of buses if off-site evacuation is required)	✓	
Procedures are in place to restrict use of machinery (e.g. angle grinders, mowers, and machinery with internal combustion engines) in close proximity to bushfire fuels where they may start a fire on severe fire danger days.	✓	
A Safer Location within the school building should be identified and prepared in the event that an off-site evacuation is not possible (Refer page 4).	✓	<i>Science/ Art block</i>
BPZ (20 metre radius), cleared of all rubbish, long dry grass, bark and flammable materials.	✓	

## 2. Catastrophic Event Flow Chart

In the event of a catastrophic weather warning the **Bushfire Plan** will be invoked as per the following flow chart: (refer to *Principal's Guide to Bushfire* for all procedures and sample letters)

### PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSE TO Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating



## 4. Communication Plan

