



Bushfire Preparedness Policy

Updated September 2020

Principal: Peter Bush
School Council President: Rebecca Rogers

Bushfire Preparedness

Kalianna School is committed to ensuring the highest standards of care, safety and welfare for its students. The school is also committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for its employees and contract workers as well as visitors to our school.

Policy & Procedures

The school recognises that in all its activities it has a duty of care to identify, assess and control risks so that the possibility of harm is minimised or eliminated.

The purpose of the bushfire preparedness policy is to detail procedures and management tasks so that the school minimises risks and is in a suitable state of preparedness for any fire related event. The policy should also nominate key personnel and areas of responsibility should the school emergency management plan be enacted due to bushfire.

Emergency Management Plan

Kalianna School must maintain an Emergency Management Plan (EMP). The EMP applies to all staff, students, visitors, contractors and volunteers at the school. The purpose of the EMP is to detail the roles, responsibilities and procedures to undertake in the event of any emergency, including bushfire.

The Principal will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that the EMP is reviewed at least annually and immediately after any significant incident. An Emergency Management Committee (EMC) should be established for this purpose and its office bearers and duties detailed in the EMP.
- Ensuring that the EMP includes policies and procedures for the planning and approval of offsite activities which consider the risk of bushfire in the activity vicinity.
- Cancelling or recalling at short notice if necessary any activity or excursion that occurs on a day of extreme fire danger or total fire ban. Where excursions are not cancelled, special fire safety precautions will be required.

All Teaching Staff will be responsible for:

- Ensuring they are familiar with emergency procedures for each excursion they participate in and in particular, emergency procedures pertaining to campsites. Emergency procedures should be explained to students as soon as practical after arrival at campsites.
- Planning to cover arrangements if an excursion needs to be cancelled or recalled because of bushfire threat.

Evacuation Drills

Regular emergency drills should be conducted at least once per term and at different times of the school day and with different emergency scenarios. The purpose of emergency drills is to:

- Familiarise staff and students with emergency procedures
- Identify weaknesses in the management of the evacuation procedures
- Assist staff and students to respond appropriately in an emergency
- Equip staff to be sufficiently flexible to manage a range of different emergencies

All Staff will be responsible for:

- Ensuring they participate fully in all drills when conducted on their campus
- Undertaking training provided by the school for any specific roles they have as part of the emergency management plan

Site Preparedness

Kalianna School must regularly manage materials that may easily be ignited around buildings and facilities.

All Maintenance staff will be responsible for:

- Completing a schedule of works in Oct and January of each school year to monitor and remove materials that may be regarded as bushfire hazards. This would include branches overhanging buildings, debris and rubbish around and under buildings including gutters and dry grass and vegetation.

All Staff will be responsible for:

- Ensuring all flammable materials within their area of responsibility are identified on the chemical register and arranging for appropriate storage in flammable resistant cabinets

Ensuring all buildings exits are continuously kept clear of obstructions. Staff should cooperate to maintain integrity of classroom and office exit points at all times.

Immediate Bushfire Threat

In the case of a bushfire threatening a campus during a day of normal school attendance, where evacuation of all those on the school site in one trip cannot be performed, the Emergency Management Plan Bushfire Procedures will be enacted. The school will have an on-site bushfire refuge nominated in their Emergency Management Plan.

Any on-site refuge needs to have the bushfire attack level (BAL) assessed and a vegetation management plan and asset protection zone nominated and maintained. In addition to this, any on site refuge must have access to emergency equipment, first aid supplies, communication systems, water and toilets. Emergency drills should include evacuation to this refuge from a number of areas around the school.

First aid materials and medical equipment are the responsibility of the first aid officer/nurse and communication systems must be maintained by Technology and Information (T & I) department.

Bush Fire at Risk Register (BARR)

In addition to the requirements of this policy, schools listed on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Bushfire at Risk Register (BARR) must have in place a number of further procedures and processes. Schools and education and care services considered to be at greatest risk of bushfire have been included on the DEECD Bushfire At-Risk Register and informed of their status on the register. The Carrum Downs campus of the school is listed on the BARR and must develop and maintain systems that show evidence of compliance with all requirements.

Closure of School on Code Red Days

Schools and education and care services identified as being at the greatest risk of bushfire and listed on the Bushfire At Risk Register will be pre-emptively closed on days determined by the Emergency Management Commissioner as having a Code Red Fire Danger Rating for their district. This closure includes exclusion of all persons - staff, students, contractors and visitors - from the school property.

The decision to pre-emptively close schools and education and care services is made by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, not the school and is based on a Code Red Day being determined by the Emergency Management Commissioner. Further information about planned closure days can be found on the DEET website.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/bushfirerisk.aspx>

It is intended that families will be provided with as much notice as possible of a planned closure. However, if unexpected weather patterns are experienced, closures may happen at short notice. The final decision to close a school or education and care service will be confirmed by the Emergency Management Commissioner no later than 1.00pm the day before the planned closure and will remain in force despite any subsequent change to weather conditions.

The Principal will be responsible for:

- Directly advising parents and guardians of any planned closure as soon as possible and at least prior to the planned closure day. Information will also be published on the Kalianna School website.
- Directly advising staff of any planned closure as soon as possible and at least prior to the planned closure day.

Staff will be responsible for:

- Advising any visitors or contractors known to them and normally expected on site on the day of a planned closure, as soon as possible.

Consultation with Local Authorities

Schools listed on the bushfire at risk register must consult local agencies where relevant on their bushfire preparedness and comply with local bushfire regulation of buildings, facilities and grounds.

A record of annual visitation or consultation should be maintained.

Parents and Guardians are responsible for:

- Providing the school with up to date emergency contacts and keeping them current throughout the year
- Informing the school of any student absence on the morning of that absence prior to the commencement of the school day or in advance of an absence where possible. In the event of an extreme fire danger day, parents and caregivers may make an informed choice to keep students at home. The school needs to be notified of this decision as per the normal absence notification.
- Formulating their own family bushfire survival plan and informing the school if their plan includes picking students up from school during the school day and advising who will be responsible for picking up students
- Making alternate care arrangements for their children in the event of a planned Code Red Day closure. No child should be left at home alone or under the supervision of older children.