



**crusoe**  
COLLEGE

# Bushfire Preparedness & Safety Policy

**IN THE EVENT OF ANY THREAT OF APPROACHING BUSHFIRE, THE ENTIRE COLLEGE WILL EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY UPON NOTICE FROM THE PRINCIPAL OR ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL TO THE THEATRE AND REMAIN THERE UNTIL APPROVED TO LEAVE**

## **RATIONALE**

Schools that have been identified as being at high fire risk and are listed on the Department's [Bushfire At-Risk Register](#) will close on days declared **Code Red**. CRUSOE COLLEGE IS ON THIS LIST.

The incidence of bushfire in Victoria highlights the need for our College to be thoroughly prepared. The College's Emergency Management Plan addresses the risk and procedure for dealing with Bushfire Emergencies and Incidents, and is informed by the DETs [Bushfire Checklist](#). This checklist covers:

- Arrangements for the safety and welfare of staff and students, including relocation to pre-arranged sites or rendezvous points;
- Readiness levels and "trigger points" for decisions regarding school closure;
- Monitoring fire risks and activity on high-risk or total fire ban days;
- Notification arrangements to emergency services;
- Accessing support, including transportation (e.g. buses) at short notice, in line with "stay or go" planning strategies;
- Communications plan and contact lists (including school community, local government and emergency services); and
- Roles and responsibilities of school personnel in executing emergency plans.

## **AIMS**

- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of the 'Whole School Community' during incidents of Bushfire or potential Bushfire.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

- Where possible, up to 3-days notice of a planned closure will be provided by the DET should the College be required to close due to a **CODE RED** Day. Parents and carers should, however, expect that in some instances fewer than 3-days notice may be provided.
- Parents will be communicated of a closure via SMS and the Compass portal, and where practical, by a note home.
- The final decision to close should be confirmed by 12 noon the day prior by the DET. This decision will not change and cannot change – regardless of any changes in the weather forecast.
- When the College is closed for bushfire, **NO** staff or members of the college community will remain on site **OR** are permitted on site during a closure (DET Requirement).
- The Principal **WILL** review the timing arrangements for the release of students on days of extreme fire danger, including their movement by bus at the end of the school day, when fire risk is generally higher.
- Parents will be notified at the start of the "summer period (term 4) and again at the beginning of the school year about these arrangements, including arrangements for communicating emergency information to them.
- Staff training for specific roles and responsibilities associated with preparing for and monitoring and executing bushfire procedures including the effective operating of emergency equipment, will be undertaken in the first week of the school year.
- On the first day of the school year, all staff are communicated with in regards to the bushfire preparedness policy.

### **School bus transport as per DET Policy**

- Bus routes passing through high-risk areas or routes operated by schools in high-risk locations will be closed on high-risk fire days.
- A school bus route will be closed if it has to pass through an area affected by fire even if the associated school is not affected by fire and remains open.
- If a bus route is threatened by unexpected fire, the school will enact its local Emergency Management Plan (EMP).
- Information on any changes to bus routes or cancellation of services will be provided by DSC to parents as soon as is possible and practicable.

### **Off-site activities as per DET Policy**

- The safety of students and staff is paramount and off-site activities may be cancelled, postponed or relocated if faced with the threat of bushfire. Off-site activities include any activity undertaken by staff and/or students away from their normal school facility (DSC). This can include camps, field trips/excursions, sporting activities, training or conferences for staff.
- As DSC is in a fire-prone area, we must consider the appropriateness of activities undertaken on days of extreme weather as well as days of total fire ban. Options could include cancelling, postponing or relocating the activity if extreme weather or fire conditions are forecast. Such decisions should be made as early as possible to ensure the ongoing safety of staff and students.
- The Management/Leadership Team will be responsible for making this decision and informing those concerned/affected. All staff are required to ensure that information about their activity (e.g. camp or excursions) has been entered into the Student Activity Locator (SAL) online database as per the DSC Excursion planning requirements (<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/forms/school/sal/enteractivity.asp>).

### **Further matters to note:**

- The College will provide local government agencies with a copy of their plan to facilitate overall coordination in the event of a bushfire and ensure the school EMP is integrated into local emergency arrangements.
- Staff, students and parents shall be informed about, and understand the school arrangements in advance of any fire emergency.
- The Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU) liaises with fire authorities to monitor major fire activity throughout the fire danger period, and communicates directly with schools that may be affected. ESMU Should be contacted ASAP regardless in the event of a threat of approaching bushfire.

### **EVALUATION**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's ANNUAL review cycle.