

Policy

Bushfire Policy

Please note this policy is mandatory and staff are required to adhere to the content

Summary

This document outlines Penola High School's Bushfire Policy

Table 1 - Document details

Publication date	
File number	
Related legislation	
Related policies, procedures, guidelines, standards, frameworks	
Version	
Replaces	
Policy officer (position)	Site Leader
Policy officer (phone)	8737 0000
Policy sponsor (position)	Penola High School
Executive director responsible (position and office)	Site Leader, Penola High School
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Table 2 - Revision record

Date	Version	Revision description

Table of Contents

Policy	1
Insert title of document	1
Summary	1
Table of Contents	3
1. Title	4
2. Purpose	4
3. Scope.....	4
4. Policy detail.....	4
5. Roles and responsibilities.....	12
6. Monitoring, evaluation and review	12
7. Definitions and abbreviations	12
8. Supporting documents.....	12
9. References	12
Appendix.....	12

1. Title
 - School Bushfire Policy for Penola High School
2. Purpose
 - ???.
3. Scope
 - Penola High School students and families.
4. Policy detail

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

The ERT shall comprise of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Fire Warden, SSO Buses and SSO Front Office.

PREPARING PENOLA HIGH 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 site Bushfire Action Plan during the first two weeks Term 4 and Term 1.
- Plan appropriate locations for students, staff and community members likely to be using the Safe Refuge. **Rymill Hall is the first choice for a Safe Refuge**; however Penola High School can be called upon as a backup. Act on Emergency Services Instructions.

FIRE REPORTED IN LOCAL DISTRICT

- Determine if bush fire is reported in pre-determined boundaries of nominated local district (bus runs area). Bus SSO to communicate with DECD School Care, Regional Office, CFS and CFA (for Victorian bus runs).

FIRE IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OR IMPACTING ON SITE

- Evacuate to Hall or oval as appropriate
- Institute search procedures if persons are unaccounted for.
- Liaise with Emergency Services members, DECD School Care and Regional Office.
- Prepare persons sheltering in the Safe Refuge for the arrival and passage of the bushfire front by assisting all to remain calm, checking safety within the building, provide regular information about situation outside, outlining possible actions after front has passed.

RECOVERY AFTER THE FRONT HAS PASSED

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

CATASTROPHIC & TOTAL FIRE BAN DAYS

Declaration of Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating THE DAY BEFORE

- R1 and R2 sites will be closed. (This does not include Penola High School. PHS WILL REMAIN OPEN).
- ALL buses will not operate throughout the affected Fire Ban District.
- Sites to implement communication plan as detailed in their Bushfire Action Plan to contact affected families.
- Parents of bus students to be advised via SMS of impending Catastrophic Fire Danger Day.
- All student excursions, off site meetings cancelled.
- All staff to inform school if they cannot travel to school due to Catastrophic Fire Danger.

Declaration of Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating DURING THE DAY

- R1 and R2 sites remain open unless otherwise instructed by Emergency Services.
- Buses operate as per normal unless otherwise instructed by Emergency Services.

Declaration of Total Fire Ban

- Fax received at Regional Office.
- Email sent out to all sites advising of Total Fire Ban.
- Site Leaders to conduct Risk Management Checklist for student excursions/off site meetings (and advise Regional Office)

PRINCIPAL

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Hold discussions with local CFS during Term 3 about bushfire preparedness of the site.
- Forward a copy of the site BAP to the Penola 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 site newsletters at least three times in each of Term 4 and Term 1.
- Ensure charge on mobile phone.
- Ensure that all new staff members, relieving staff and visitors are briefed about the requirements of the BAP during the site induction process.
- Provide evacuation procedures at events.

PREPARING PENOLA HIGH SCHOOL FOR A BUSH FIRE

- Develop and review Bush Fire Hazard Management Plans for onsite 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 all timber and paintwork is well maintained.

SAFE REFUGE

- Arrange Emergency Bush Fire drills during the first 2 weeks of Term 4 and Term 1 each year.
- Advertise alternative pick up points and vehicle access points to be used after a bush fire.
- Ensure signals (continuous lots of 3) for movement to Safe Refuge are well understood by students and staff and have been made well known to parents.

TOTAL FIRE BAN DAY

- Ensure procedures for actions by Deputy Principal and SSOs are implemented.

FIRE REPORTED IN LOCAL DISTRICT

- Maintain visual check of surrounding area.
- Inform District Office of fire reported in local area.
- Liaise with local CFS/CFA 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.
- Assess if it is safe to release students from site at normal time 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.
- Open and prepare offsite Safe Refuge for arrival of students.
- Prepare Safe Refuge for arrival of students (eg Emergency Contacts, medical needs etc)
- Give clear directive about school buses leaving site. Only authorise buses to leave after specific direction from SAPOL, DECD School Care or CFS Incident Management.
- Arrange for supervision of any students remaining on site until they are collected by parents.

FIRE IN IMMEDIATE VICINITY OR IMPACTING ON SITE

- Request Emergency Services assistance immediately.
- Sound agreed alarm or megaphone to initiate evacuation process.
- Turn off air conditioner and close all air vents in Safe Refuge as the bush fire front approaches.
- Ensure all people on site (staff, students, people signed in) are accounted for and in the Safe Refuge (visitor book & sign in/out student list).
- Advise Regional Office of evacuation, numbers of students, staff and community members on site.

RECOVERY AFTER THE FRONT HAS PASSED

- Ensure no one leaves the Safe Refuge until situation outside has been assessed as safe.
- Liaise with Emergency Services on site as soon as possible.
- Advise District Office of current situation.
- Refer media enquiries to Regional Director.
- At an appropriate time after the incident, lead 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 site buildings.
- Complete the relevant report available on www.crisis.sa.edu.au

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

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.
- Unlock and open gates on Total Fire Ban days and if a fire is reported in the local district.
- Ensure charge of mobile phone.

TOTAL FIRE BAN DAY

- Inform students and staff of Total Fire Ban day in morning Notices.
- Cancel student off site excursions and staff off site meetings, when required, after consultation with Principal.

CATASTROPHIC FIRE BAN DAY

- Notify parents of bus students of Catastrophic fire danger.
- Place Safe Refuge signs in place.
- Place Total Fire Ban signs on entrances to buildings and classroom.
- Inform students and staff of Total Fire Ban day in morning Notices.
- Cancel student off site excursions and staff off site meetings, when required, after consultation with Principal.

FIRE REPORTED IN LOCAL DISTRICT

Liaise with Principal to:

- 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 site at normal time.
- Liaise with SAPOL/CFS, school bus operator and drivers to determine any impact on bus routes in area of reported fire.
- Supervise any students remaining on site after hours.

FIRE IN IMMEDIATE VICINITY OR IMPACTING ON SITE

- Sound agreed alarm or megaphone when evacuation is initiated.
- Ensure that members of the local community are accommodated appropriately in the Safe Refuge.

SSO STAFF

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Forward a copy of the Bush Fire Action Plan to all families of students on site at the beginning of Term 1 each year.
- **Check Emergency Supplies Kit every three months.**
- Check the contents of the Safe Refuge First Aid Kit at the start of each term.
- Monitor local ABC radio for CFS Bushfire Information and Warnings Messages.
- Purchase fresh bottles of drinking water in Term 1 each year.
- **Refill drinking water storage containers each 3 weeks during Term 4 and Term 1.**
- **Assemble Emergency Supplies kit.**

SAFE REFUGE

Penola High School is not the first choice for Safe Refuge, but may still be called upon.

- **Make laminated A3 Safe Refuge posters for display on Community Library windows.**
- Make laminated A4 Total Fire Ban posters for display in classroom windows.
- Establish a labelled Safe Refuge mobile storage unit of essential items.
- List and assemble student and staff medications and update as necessary.

TOTAL FIRE BAN DAY

- Update student and staff medication list and prepare medication for transportation to Safe Refuge.
- Ensure students rolls, visitor registers are up to date.
- Record student movements as parents come to collect them.
- Maintain charge on mobile phones.

FIRE REPORTED IN LOCAL DISTRICT

- Monitor local radio network when fire reported in local district.
- **Place Emergency Supplies kit in Safe Refuge.**

- Identify and list all students and staff who live in affected area.
- Record names of students collected during the day.
- Back up all computer records.
- Alert visitors and volunteers of situation and actions to take if move to Safe Refuge is signalled.
- Turn off all external gas cylinders.
- Ensure megaphone ready for use.

FIRE IN IMMEDIATE VICINITY OR IMPACTING ON SITE

- Monitor register of visitors and volunteers on site and report to Principal.
- Inform parents via SMS message that students are in the **Safe Refuge**.

RECOVERY AFTER THE FRONT HAS PASSED

- Check for and treat any injuries
- Record names of students and person collecting them as they leave the site.
- **Replenish the emergency Supplies pack.**

ALL STAFF MEMBERS

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Undertake pre fire season updates during Term 3 and receive ongoing information and instruction about the contents and requirements of the BAP during Term 4 and Term 1 staff meetings.
- Undertake allocated roles and responsibilities.

CATASTROPHIC FIRE BAN DAY

- Staff who live outside of Penola will arrange with Deputy Principal each year their choice of the following:
 - a) stay home to defend.
 - b) attend as normal if no fire between home and site.
 - c) report to another DECD site as previously arranged.
- Staff who choose options a) or c) must call the school by 8.30am on these days to confirm safety.

TOTAL FIRE BAN DAY

- 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 away from vegetation on Total Fire Ban days.
- Ensure hazards are removed from passages and walkways.

FIRE REPORTED IN DISTRICT

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

FIRE IN IMMEDIATE VICINITY OR IMPACTING ON SITE

- Be aware of 'triggers' and signal for move to Safe Refuge.
- Take fire extinguishers from classrooms to Safe Refuge.
- Close all classroom doors and windows and turn off air conditioners on leaving.
- Check student roll when seated in Safe Refuge and report to Principal.
- Prepare for unexpected toileting of students

RECOVERY AFTER THE FRONT HAS PASSED

- Reunite families in a safe location.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

- Monitor local ABC radio for CFS Bushfire Information and Warnings Messages
- Put out Total Fire Ban signs at gateways on days of Extreme fire danger.
- Supervise students remaining on site if school buses unable to leave.
- Remain on duty to supervise students for an extended period of time.
- Extinguish small fire in or near the Safe Refuge.

GROUNDS PERSON

- Undertake regular inspections of vegetation around buildings and maintain required clearances during the year.
- Inspect vegetation around buildings with Principal in Term 3 each year.
- Clean low level gutters each month.
- Test and run grounds irrigation systems weekly during Term 4 and Term 1.
- Check pumps, sprinkler systems and grounds irrigation are operating correctly and hoses fitted.
- Turn on grounds irrigation systems hourly if a fire is reported in the district.

PROCEDURE FOR SAFETY OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN CASE OF BUSHFIRE

BUS DRIVER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

ON PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS DAYS ENSURE BUS ROLL IS UP TO DATE AND ALL CHILDRENS' ATTENDANCE IS NOTED.

Check with the Penola High School Principal to ascertain if there are any fires burning in the district.

PRECAUTIONS

- Ensure the bus is kept in reliable mechanical condition. If there is any evidence of vaporisation of the fuel supply on hot days, carry out modifications to eliminate the problem. Check that fire extinguishers are working.
- Check fire exit areas from the bus are easily accessible and opened.
- Ensure that the bus is equipped with water and **emergency provisions**.

PRE BUSHFIRE SEASON PLANNING

- **Meet with bus contractors and bus drivers at the start of Term 1 and 4 to ensure that bushfire procedures are understood.**
- Pre plan emergency areas for each bus run (any farm/cleared property) that the bus can access during an emergency. Locations may change during each fire season.
- **Carry out emergency bushfire bus procedure drill with students and driver of each bus.**
- Map mobile phones and UHF radio 'dead areas' on **each** run.

DURING BUSHFIRE SEASON

On days of forecast catastrophic fire danger rating, R1 and R2 bushfire risk rated schools and preschools in the affected Fire Ban Districts will be closed. School bus routes travelling through the affected Fire Ban Districts will be cancelled for the period of the forecast. If the Fire Ban rating changes to 'Catastrophic' during the day, school buses will operate as normal. If a bushfire is reported in the area during the day the site leader will contact local emergency services (SAPOL and/or CFS) for advice regarding accessibility of roads travelled by school buses. 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 buses can run or students are collected by parents.

If, during a bus run, the bus driver sights a bushfire and there is 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 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.
- 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

IF A BUS IS IMMEDIATELY ENDANGERED BY A FIRE

- Park on the side of the road, on bare ground if possible, or against a high bank or in a cutting.
- Close all doors and windows, vents or other openings.
- Try to block up all cracks liable to allow entry of smoke, sparks or embers.
- Switch off the engine and leave parking and hazard lights operating.
- Stay inside the bus and ensure that all passengers stay with you.

YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR SAFETY

- Lie down on the seats or floor, or under the seats to minimise the effects of the radiation from the fire.
- Cover as much exposed skin as possible.
- Wait for the fire to pass before leaving the bus. If forced to leave, wait until the last possible moment and then use the bulk of the bus as a shield against the heat of the main fire.
- If forced out and away from the bus, stay on the road. Lie down and try to cover your head and exposed skin. **DO NOT RUN.**
- Drivers should try to keep the young passengers calm and free of panic.

IF YOU SEE A FIRE AHEAD

- Do not enter smoke unless you see through it and **KNOW** it is a small fire. **IF IN DOUBT, DO NOT ENTER.**
- If blinded by smoke pull to the side of the road and wait.
- If, when starting your run into school, you can see fire ahead and you have doubts about the safety of the students who may be with you or waiting for you on the other side of the road, or, if on your way home you have doubts about dropping off children who must walk or ride any distance through grass or bush, (stop and telephone for advice.) Remember, it may be possible to get parents to come and meet the children. If telephone lines are down or jammed, it is best that children stay in the bus until the danger has passed. You may decide to continue doing the route with the children still in the bus, making arrangements to return them later. If there is a nearby suitable turning place on the road you may decide to go back to the starting point. **DON'T LEAVE THE APPROVED ARRANGED ROUTE** unless you are sure you have authority from the Police to do so.
- If you don't know the alternative route, ask for a pilot car. **STAY CALM, OTHER LIVES DEPEND ON YOUR ABILITY TO COPE WITH THIS CRISIS SITUATION.**

5. Roles and responsibilities

Table 2 - Roles and responsibilities

Role	Authority/responsibility for
Penola High School Governing Council	Penola High School Bushfire Policy

6. Monitoring, evaluation and review

- Term 3, 2017.
- Review will occur through consultation with ??????????????.
- Penola High School Governing Council.

7. Definitions and abbreviations

Table 3 - Definitions and abbreviations

Term	Meaning

8. Supporting documents

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9. References

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Appendix

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