TECOMA PRIMARY SCHOOL

BUSHFIRE POLICY

Help for non-English speakers



If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Principal, Katrina Ellis

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure everyone in aware of the procedures which are in place at Tecoma Primary School:

- on a Catastrophic Day
- on days of Total Fire Ban
- in the case of a fire.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- all students, parents, staff, volunteers and on-site workers at Tecoma Primary School

POLICY

Total Fire Ban Days

On Catastrophic Days, our school will be closed, in line with Education Department directives.

However, on other Total Fire Ban days students are required to attend school unless parents decide otherwise. A note regarding absences will be required.

Special precautions are taken on these days by ensuring student attendance is marked early in both the morning and afternoon sessions and by keeping informed of any fire activity through the CFA website and through contact with local emergency services.

In the Case of a Fire

All children, staff, volunteers and onsite workers will evacuate to our school hall. This is our 'safe place' building that has been established to ensure safety for Tecoma students and staff, Tecoma preschool students and staff and anyone working onsite at the time.

The school has adequate drinking water supplies and biscuits for the children to be held in this location for up to 24 hours.

Parents please note: our school hall is not a refuge for the community or parents, and you will not be able to join your children in the hall in the event of an evacuation.

The school will determine the time of the implementation of evacuation plans and will liaise with the CFA, the Department of Education and police response teams.

The release of children to parents will be determined by the CFA, when it is deemed safe to do so. Parents will not be able to collect children from the school until this time. This may mean that the school's duty of care extends into times outside normal school times.

Before and After School Care students are included in our plans.

Once everyone onsite is at our 'safe place' parents will be notified by SMS and COMPASS that we have enacted our evacuation plans. This will also urge parents not to come to the school, as they will not be able to enter the hall and children will not be able to be released until the CFA and Emergency Services directs the principal that it is safe to do so. Parents will be notified, by SMS and COMPASS, once approval has been given that it is safe to release students.

CFA and emergency services strongly recommend that people are not travelling on roads, even for short distances, at these times. With expected roadblocks, there is no guarantee that you will be able to travel to or from your destination.

Parents are strongly encouraged to implement their personal fire safety plans in the event of an emergency.

Parents are urged not to phone the school as this line may be required to contact the Department of Education and emergency officers. We cannot assume that mobile phones will be operating.

Parents are urged not to attempt to come to the school as this will often be very unsafe to do so. The school car park will be required for authorised vehicles.

CFA information will be broadcast on ABC radio and local radio stations as well as their website www.cfa.vic.gov.au. In the event of an emergency, parents are strongly encouraged to listen to this for further information. Our schools' emergency plans include the use of a portable radio.

School Closures

Schools (government and non-government), kindergartens and childcare facilities determined by the Department to be at high-risk of fire danger have been placed on a Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) and will be pre-emptively closed on days when a Catastrophic fire danger warning is issued.

Tecoma Primary School is a school on the BARR and once the directive is made by the department, this will not change.

Where possible, up to 3-days' notice of a planned closure will be provided, once the school is advised to close by the Department; parents and carers should, however, expect that in some instances fewer than 3-days' notice may be provided.

Once the final decision to close is confirmed by the department at 12 noon the day prior, this decision will not change – regardless of any changes in the weather forecast. This will help limit confusion and help your family plan for how your children will be cared for when the school is closed.

When our school is closed on a Catastrophic Day, no staff will be on site. The safety of children and staff is the paramount consideration.

The school has an SMS system in place, plus a COMPASS, which will be used to advise parents in the event of a school closure. Therefore, it is imperative that we have up to date contact numbers and email addresses. Please always advise in writing of any changes to these as soon as you can. We will also rely on the networking of members of our school community to ensure that parents are aware of any closures.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in the school newsletter at the beginning of each fire season
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed in an annual staff briefing/meeting
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

This policy has a review cycle of 3-4 years	This policy was approved by School Council on 20th October, 2026
Reviewed by	Katrina Ellis, Emily MacKay, Lisa Dell, Lisa Hoskins-Faul, Chelsey Robins
Approved by	Principal – Katrina Ellis School Council President – Lisa Dell