

BUSHFIRE POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure everyone is 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.

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

Special precautions are taken on these days by collecting a student attendance roll 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 students 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 children are included in our plans.

Once everyone onsite is at our 'safe place' parents will be notified by SMS and *School Stream* 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 *School Stream*, 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 road blocks, 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 and a broadband scanning device.

School Closures

Schools (government and non-government), kindergartens and child care 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.

Where possible, up to 3-days' notice of a planned closure will be provided; 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 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 *School Stream* app, 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. Please always advise in writing of any changes to contact numbers. 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

<i>This policy has a review cycle of 3-4 years</i>	This policy was approved by School Council on 16th March, 2021 and is scheduled for review in March 2024 .
<i>Reviewed by</i>	<i>Rohan Thompson, Di Double, Chelsey Robins, Stuart McLean, Matt Ford, Bec Hale, Lisa Hoskins-Faul, Phil Darbyshire</i>
<i>Approved by</i>	Principal – Rohan Thompson School Council President – Lisa Dell

'Code Red Days' were changed to 'Catastrophic Days' in September, 2022.