

ST JOSEPH'S SOUTHERN CROSS

BUSHFIRE PLAN TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION

This Stand-alone Bushfire Plan is for St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and has been designed to assist staff to prepare for a total fire ban, catastrophic fire danger rating, or a bushfire. Letters to staff and parents are included in the Appendices as well as notices for the closure of the school.

The preparation of this Stand-alone Bushfire Plan should be developed in accordance with the *Emergency and Critical Incident Management Policy* and *The Principal's Guide to Bushfire* with input from local emergency management agencies.

Overview

General Information

This Bushfire Plan (BP) has been developed before 31 August each year after consultation with:

- families of students attending the school;
- members of the emergency services (e.g. Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), Local Emergency Management Committee and/or Community Emergency Services Manager).

The BP includes a checklist of required actions to prepare the school before the bushfire season as per *The Principal's Guide to Bushfire* (refer [Appendix A](#)).

The BP also outlines activities to be undertaken by staff and students at the different levels of a bushfire emergency including:

- on days of Total Fire Ban;
- Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating;
- when there is a fire in the local district;
- when a bushfire is threatening or impacting on the site; and
- during the period immediately after a bushfire has impacted on the site (known as the 'Recovery Phase').

Where applicable, a building is nominated as the **Safer Building Location** building for this school. This building has been prepared for a bushfire emergency and will safely accommodate all persons normally at the school.

Distribution

The Principal must prepare and update the BP in readiness for the bushfire season and then upload it through an [electronic portal](#). Schools will receive a notification when this needs to occur.

The Principal or delegated officer will:

- Publish an up-to-date copy of the school's BP on the school's website no later than 31 August of each year;
- ensure details of the website are provided to families of new students during the enrolment process;
- ensure that all new staff members, relieving staff and visitors are briefed about the requirements of the BP during the site induction process; include bushfire season reminders and information in site newsletters at least three times each term;
- Update the School's Information Booklet in Term 1 each year, including detailed information about actions and procedures included in the BP; and provide all staff members with pre-bushfire season updates during Term 3 and ongoing information and instruction about the contents and requirements of the BP during Term 4 and Term 1 staff meetings.

The safety and wellbeing of students, staff and visitors is at all times the Department's main priority. Staff are not expected to fight bushfires.

The school will review (and update where appropriate) the BP on an annual basis.

Any bushfire advice received by the school from DFES, the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC), Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) or external experts needs to be documented identifying the date and source of the advice.

Date of Review	Reviewing Officer	Date Submitted	Next scheduled Review
30 th Nov 2016	Natalia Thomson	2016	Term 3 2017
11 th October 2017	Rika Andres	2017	Term 3 2018
16 th November 2018	Rika Andres	2018	Term 3 2019

COMMUNICATION

There are several levels of communication requirements at school level before, during and after bushfire events.

Preparing for Bushfire Season

- The Principal must ensure all students, staff (including relief), and parents are aware of the school's BP. A copy of the school's BP should be published on the school's website. Suggested draft text for the school newsletter is available in Appendix B6 of *The Principal's Guide to Bushfire*.
- The Principal should establish contact with emergency services, including DFES, the local volunteer fire brigade, Western Australia (WA) Police, the LEMC and CESM.
- Schools located in bushfire prone areas need to incorporate key bushfire messages in their curriculum. Research shows that if students develop and undertake drills as part of the emergency planning, the message is more meaningful and transfers to the home environment. Additional benefits can be realised by taking activities home that need to be completed and returned. This can serve to increase families' level of awareness and preparedness in regard to bushfire survival plans or household preparedness assessments.
- Communication Plans (including emergency contacts and a Telephone Call Tree) need to be in place for evacuation or planned closure. See [Appendix D](#) for a Communication Plan, [Appendix E](#) for Sample Emergency Contacts and [Appendix F](#) for a Sample Telephone Call Tree.
- The school has an effective working emergency warning or alert system and emergency communication equipment is available and working.
- Schools have in place systems to account for students, staff and visitors in an emergency, such as class rolls (or equivalent) and visitor registers. Consideration should be in place for situations such as a loss of power affecting the ability to print from electronic sources.
- Schools need to identify more than one suitable off-site location, in case one is in the area of the bushfire.
- Arrangements are in place in relation to school buses if appropriate (notification of contractors if pre-emptive closure is invoked; and the availability of buses if off-site evacuation is required).

Pre-emptive Closure

- The Department Incident Controller (normally the Deputy Director General Schools or delegated officer) will make the decision to close a school based upon advice from emergency services and this will be relayed to the Principal via the Regional Executive Director.
- The Principal is to notify staff and parents of closure using emergency contacts and the Telephone Call Tree. See also the draft letter to parents in Appendix B7 of *The Principal's Guide to Bushfire* advising of pre-emptive closure, being mindful of parents' level of literacy and understanding of English.
- All other necessary parties are advised, including, but not limited to other schools that may have siblings at your school, community users of the school facilities (including before and after school care, or holiday programs), community kindergartens, on site contractors, Parents and Citizens Association (P & C) and school council.
- If appropriate, bus contractors will be contacted to arrange for the evacuation of students to a designated area.
- Notice of Planned Temporary School Closure should be posted as per *The Principal's Guide to Bushfire*, both physically at the school and electronically on the website.

During Evacuation

- The school will contact the Regional Executive Director and the Department's Media Unit.
- The school will contact parents via phone or email, ensuring they have a mobile phone contact number for the school. It would be preferable that parents restrict calling the school at this time to emergency calls only.
- The school will notify bus contractors and Out of School programs.
- The official broadcaster of Emergency Events is ABC Radio. Your local station will be ABC local Radio. They will provide up to date information during a bushfire event in your area.
- The DFES website provides up to date information on fire events. Refer to <http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/>.

NOTE: DFES uses the national Emergency Alert system to send community warning messages via mobile telephones in affected areas. (Information can be obtained from <http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/pages/default.aspx>).

The Principal communicates directly with Regional and Central Office personnel including any media communications. Staff should not comment directly to the media.

Reopening the School

- The Regional Executive Director is to advise the Principal when the school can re-open.
- Parents need to know when the school is re-opened. In the event of a pre-emptive closure details are contained in the template letter (*Principal's Guide to Bushfire* advising of pre-emptive Closure – Appendix B7).
- The *Notice of Planned Temporary School Closure* should be physically removed from the school premises and website.
- All parties that were advised of closure (e.g. bus contractors, Out of Hours users, community kindergartens, (P&C) and school council should be advised of reopening.

TYPES OF FIRE EVENT

In the event of a Total Fire Ban, catastrophic weather warning, or bushfire, the **BP** will be activated.

1. Total Fire Ban

In the event of a Total Fire Ban, the **BP** will be invoked: (refer to *Principal's Guide to Bushfire* for all procedures). This means:

- no fires must be lit or used in the open air;
- all open fires for the purpose of cooking or camping are not allowed; and
- 'hot work' such as metal work, grinding, welding, soldering, gas cutting or similar is not allowed unless there is an exemption.

DFES advise that chainsaws, plant or grass trimmers or lawn mowers can be used during a total fire ban in suburban or built up areas which are cleared of flammable material, but not in bushland or other areas where their use may cause a fire.

It is also necessary to ensure:

- the equipment or machinery is mechanically sound; and
- all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent a bushfire starting.

It is recommended postponing the activity altogether to minimise the risk of fire.

If a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban has not been implemented by your Local Government Authority, the school/college is able to harvest or move vehicles across paddocks for agricultural purposes.

Individuals could be fined up to \$25 000 or jailed for 12 months (or both) if the Total Fire Ban is ignored.

For information on activities that can or cannot be carried out during a Total Fire Ban visit
<https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au/#totalfirebans>.
https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/safetyinformation/fire/bushfire/BushfireFactsheets/DFES_Bushfire_Factsheet-Total_Fire_Bans.pdf.

If the information required is not available from the website, telephone the Total Fire Ban Information Line 1800 709 355.

This information is also available by visiting www.dfes.wa.gov.au and Emergency WA website: www.emergency.wa.gov.au.

2. Catastrophic Fire Danger

The Catastrophic Fire Danger Index (FDR) has been added to the Australia-wide FDR system since the 2009 bushfires in Victoria. If a fire starts in catastrophic conditions, its impact potential includes death or injury to people and destruction of buildings.

Category	Fire Danger Index (FDR)	Action
Catastrophic	100+	Schools on Bushfire Zone Register closed on instruction from Deputy Director General Schools, through Regional Executive Director. School to invoke Communication Plan and cancel bus services.
Extreme	75-99	Monitor DFES website
Severe	50-74	Monitor DFES website
Very High	32-49	Normal school operations
High	12-31	Normal school operations
Low-Moderate	0-11	Normal school operations

In the event of a catastrophic weather warning, the **BP** will be invoked as per the flow chart at [Appendix B](#) (refer to *Principal's Guide to Bushfire* for all procedures and sample letters).

2.1 Planned Pre-emptive Closure

Regional Executive Directors will contact principals of affected schools directly when a planned (pre-emptive) closure is to be invoked in a particular part of the State. The lead time for a planned closure varies depending on weather patterns, but every attempt is made to give principals as much notice as possible to prepare written documentation for parents. Schools should have Telephone Call Tree in place to provide this information at short notice or after hours.

Once advised that your school is to undertake pre-emptive closure, you need to notify your school community that a closure is imminent. The Principal needs to send letters to parents and provide each staff member with a memo that clearly states when the closure is planned to occur and that the school is on standby. It may be that between declaration of the closure and the day of closure, weather conditions improve sufficiently to remove the need to close and the school can therefore stand down its pre-emptive closure plans.

The Regional Executive Director confirms with the Principal the final decision to close the school no later than **4:30 pm** the day before the planned closure. If weather conditions become less severe after **4:30 pm**, the closure goes ahead regardless, in order to provide a level of certainty to parents.

DFES is the final authority on advice about which schools are in danger and the level of risk at the time. The Deputy Director General Schools makes the final decision as to whether or not a planned closure of public schools is to proceed, based on DFES's advice.

2.2 During a Planned Closure

The Principal must stay informed of the current fire danger rating and any fire activity by monitoring local media (local radio, especially the ABC, and television) and by regularly checking for updates with DFES.

2.3 Re-opening School

Parents need to know when the Catastrophic FDR has been downgraded and that it is therefore safe for their children to return to school after a planned closure. The Template Letter to parents contains advice on how parents can monitor the situation. The school will need to put communication plans in place, such as placing a notice on the school website and providing a phone number for parents to call for information about the reopening of the school. Consideration needs to be given to how parents who do not have internet access or who have diverse needs (e.g. multicultural, special needs) will be provided with information.

3. Bushfire

In the event of a bushfire threatening the school, the school will notify DFES and the BP will be invoked by way of the school siren (or hand-held siren)

Note: add your school's site specific alert tone.

3.1. Bushfire – Warnings

During a bushfire, emergency services provide as much information as possible through a number of different channels.

There are three levels of warning:

- **ADVICE;**
- **WATCH AND ACT;** and
- **EMERGENCY WARNING.**

These change to reflect the increasing risk to life and the decreasing amount of time you have until the fire arrives. Download a copy of DFES bushfire warning table from:

<https://www.does.wa.gov.au/safetyinformation/warningsystems/Pages/BushfireWarningSystem.aspx>

If the school is likely to be threatened by the fire, activate the *Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan* immediately.

3.1.1 Advice

An **ADVICE** provides you with information on a bushfire that is not threatening lives or property, but may be causing smoke near schools.

The actions required are to turn off and monitor evaporative air conditioners, undertake regular checks, and patrol the school for bushfire activity.

3.1.2 Watch and Act

A **WATCH AND ACT** message tells you the fire conditions are changing and there is a possible threat to lives and schools.

The Principal or delegate should contact the controlling agency to seek instruction as to whether to move students, staff and visitors to their pre-determined Safer Building Location and not an open area on the site or evacuate.

If the decision is to evacuate, and contact cannot be made with the Emergency Services, the site manager should ensure the safe movement of staff and students to a safer location off-site. Considerations should include the location of bushfire, ability to travel safely to the selected location and the safest route to get there. In some circumstances, it may not be safe to evacuate.

3.1.3 Emergency Warning

An **EMERGENCY WARNING** is the highest level of warning and indicates **immediate** danger. In some circumstances, it may start with a siren sound called the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) to get your attention as the fire is about to arrive. SEWS is a distinctive sound that is broadcast immediately prior to major emergency announcements on radio, television and other communication systems. SEWS tells people 'you need to listen – there is an emergency in your area and you need to take action now'. It is used like a siren and is strictly controlled for use by an authorised hazard management agency only.

The Principal or delegate should contact the controlling agency to seek instruction as to whether to move students, staff and visitors to their pre-determined Safer Building Location and not an open area on the site or evacuate.

If the decision is to evacuate, and contact cannot be made with the emergency services, the site manager should ensure the safe movement of staff and students to a safer location off-site. Considerations should include the location of bushfire, ability to travel safely to the selected location and the safest route to get there. In some circumstances, it may not be safe to evacuate.

3.1.4 All Clear

An **ALL CLEAR** is issued when the threat has passed, and the fire is under control.

Firefighters will still be working to put out the last remnants of the fire and making the area safe. Emergency services will advise when school students and/or staff can be released.

3.2. Bushfire – Act

3.2.1 Response when a bushfire starts and the school is open

3.2.1.1 Evacuation Procedure

School to evacuate off-site on advice from DFES

Has the evacuation to the off-site safer location been approved and how long will it take to get there?

- All classes remain with their teachers and support staff.
- All other staff and visitors report to the Front Office.
- Teachers account for each child and identify students and support staff with known respiratory conditions.
- Doors, roof vents and windows must be closed **and evaporative air coolers turned off**.
- Students and staff are to remain in classrooms unless directed otherwise by the fire warden.
- Fire wardens are designated to manage evacuation routes and liaise with staff.
- The Principal and fire wardens will control this response and must liaise with DFES or emergency services as soon as possible.
- Students and adults with known respiratory conditions will be identified and given special consideration.

Parent Access

Parents will be informed when and where to pick up students upon advice from the school.

3.2.1.2 Safer Building Location Procedure – if evacuation is not possible

- School to remain on site on advice from DFES.
- All classes remain with their teachers and support staff.
- All classes to relocate to the designated Safer Building Location (**add name to plan of Safer Building Location within school**). See [Appendix C](#) for a sample safer location evacuation plan.
- All other staff and visitors report to the Front Office.
- Teachers account for each child and identify students and support staff with known respiratory conditions.
- Doors, roof vents and windows must be closed and **evaporative air coolers turned off**. Students and staff are to remain in classrooms unless directed otherwise by the fire warden.
- Fire wardens are designated to manage evacuation routes and liaise with staff.
- The Principal and fire wardens will control this response and must liaise with DFES or emergency services as soon as possible.
- Students and adults with known respiratory conditions will be identified and given special consideration.

Parent Access

Parents advised **NOT** to pick up students and to monitor local media for specific access information.

3.2.2 Response when a bushfire starts and the school is closed

If the Department's Incident Controller makes a decision on school closure-based advice from emergency services, the Regional Executive Director will inform the Principal of closure.

The Principal is to notify staff and parents of the closure using the emergency contact list (see [Appendix D](#) for a Sample Communication Plan).

The Department's Incident Controller will, in consultation with the Regional Executive Director, identify alternative accommodation of students and staff, if required. The Department's Media Unit will utilise media outlets to make public announcements of school closures, temporary alternative accommodation and contact number(s) for further information.

The Department's Incident Controller (in consultation with DFES) will inform the Regional Executive Director when the school can reopen, who will inform the Principal accordingly.

3.2.3 Recovery

The priorities for the school during recovery are:

- Health and safety of individuals;
- Social recovery; and
- Physical (structural) recovery.

General

- When possible, return to normal routine as soon as possible.
- Attend to staff and student welfare, considering counselling support.
- Provide information for families and the community of any impact (including if there is none) on the school and school routine following the bushfire.
- Undertake a check of any equipment or stock used and arrange for replacement/replenishment.
- Address any physical damage to the school, isolating areas if required and, if necessary, relocate to alternative accommodation. Contact the Department of Finance's Building Management and Works to commence repairs. The Department should be advised of any damage caused by the bushfire.
- Attend to security if necessary (Contact Manager, Security and Emergency Management at Central Office on 9264 4825).
- Manage administrative details including insurance.

Debrief

- What worked, what didn't?
- Was anything overlooked?
- What could you and your staff do better next time?
- Should any delegation be reassigned?
- If changes are made, incorporate them into the BP and advise the appropriate parties including staff and other authorities.
- Share the knowledge with other schools.
- Test the revised BP and procedures.

For further details and contacts refer to the Recovery Section of the *Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan* and *The Principal's Guide to Bushfire*.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: COMPLIANCE: Bushfire Preparation Checklist



Department of
Education

Bushfire Preparation Checklist for the
Bushfire season

Principals should be thoroughly familiar with their current plans for dealing with bushfires.

All staff members should be aware of their responsibilities in accordance with the Stand-alone Bushfire Plan

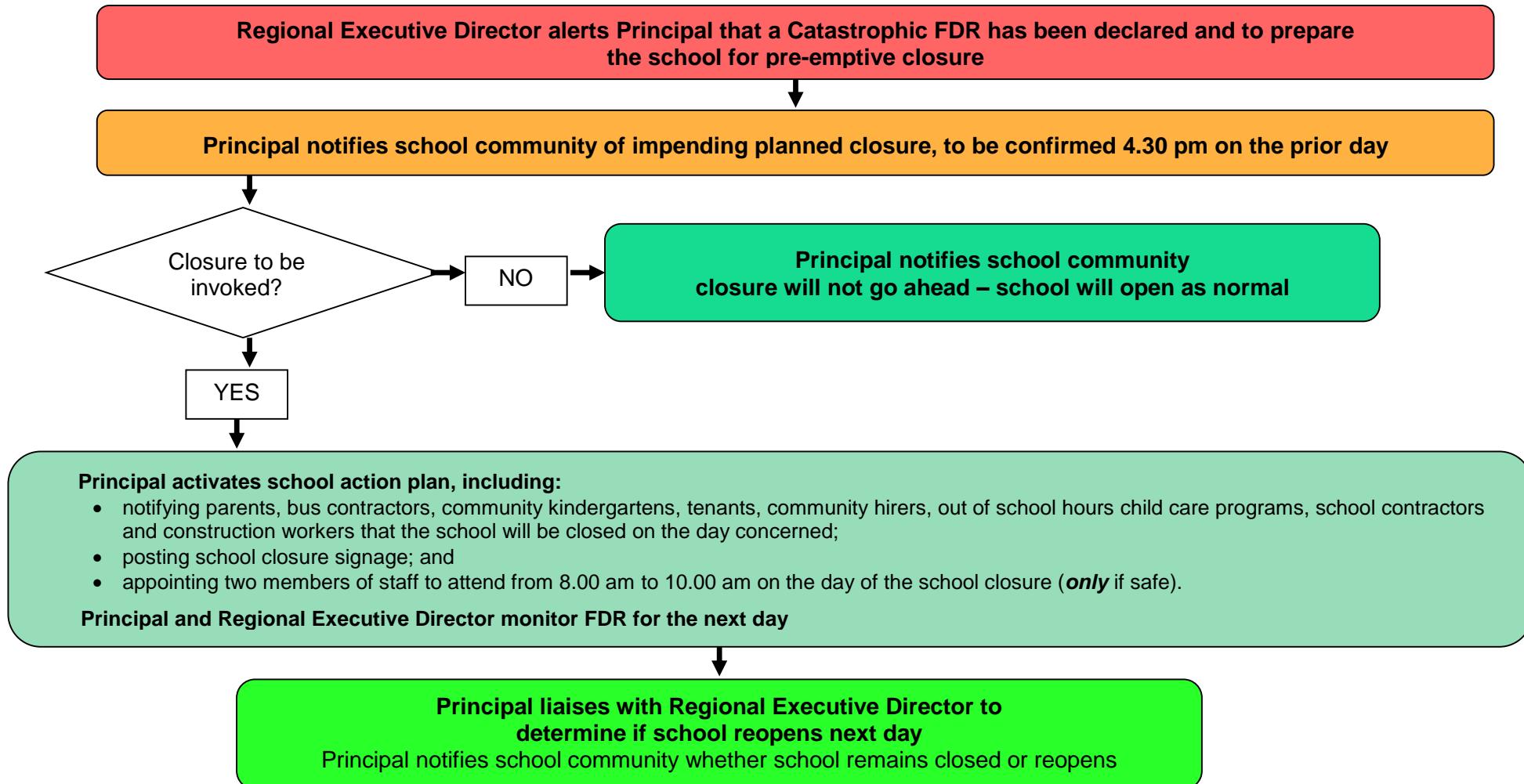
MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES		
Tick when task has been completed, or write NA if not applicable(<input type="checkbox"/>)	Evidence	
The School <i>Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan</i> provides a plan for dealing with bushfires. Schools on the Bushfire Zone Register must also have a separate Stand-alone Bushfire Plan.	<i>Tick</i>	<u>Crisis Management.doc</u> <u>Evacuation Plan.pub</u> <u>Evacuation Policy.doc</u>
Principal is thoroughly familiar with the school's Stand-alone Bushfire Plan.	<i>Tick</i>	Plan reviewed 16/11/2018
Students, staff, relief staff and parents/carers have been made aware of the School's Stand-alone Bushfire Plan.	<i>Tick</i>	Staff meeting 22/11/2018 and newsletter sent to parents/carers with bushfire information 22/11/2018
The Stand-alone Bushfire Plan has been reviewed prior to the bushfire season (31 August each year) and a copy uploaded to the <u>electronic portal</u> and on the school's website.		
Schools on the Bushfire Zone Register have appointed a school emergency liaison officer. The appointed liaison officer may be required to relocate during an emergency to the Incident Control Point to provide an information conduit between the school and the controlling agency. The Principal and liaison officer have established contact with local emergency services, DFES, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions – Parks and Wildlife Services (if relevant), the local volunteer fire brigade, WA Police, Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC), local government representative or Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) (if there is one for the area), and incorporated their feedback into the plans (as required).		
Emergency services, (outlined above), are informed of your nominated pre-determined Safer Building Location and not an open area as part of your Emergency Critical Incident Management Plan procedures.		

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES		
		Evidence
Schools on the Bushfire Zone Register understand the bushfire warning system and the Emergency Alert telephone warning system		
Schools on the Bushfire Zone Register need to incorporate key bushfire messages in the curriculum.		
Schools know how to turn off evaporative air conditioner units, including awareness of the location of the switches, and how to close roof vents.	Tick	
Communication plans (include Telephone Call Tree – see Appendix F) are in place for directed evacuation or planned closure	Tick	
Evacuation drills practised prior to the start of the bushfire season and at least once per term during the bushfire season. The bushfire season typically runs from late August to April in southern WA and June to late October in northern WA. Note: this is a minimum of three drills per year.	Tick	
School has a correctly functioning emergency warning or alert system.	Tick	
Emergency communications equipment is available e.g. mobile telephones, hand-operated fire alarm (portable siren), portable radios and spare batteries.		
Class rolls and visitor register (or equivalent) are readily accessible in an emergency to account for students, staff and visitors.	Tick	
First aid equipment is available and staff members trained in first aid have been identified.	Tick	
Evacuation kit should be checked at least once per term.		
Arrangements are in place in relation to school buses (notification of contractors if pre-emptive closure is invoked; availability of buses if off-site evacuation is required)	Tick	
Procedures are in place to restrict use of machinery (e.g. angle grinders, mowers, and machinery with internal combustion engines) in close proximity to bushfire fuels where they may start a fire on severe fire danger days.		
A Safer Building Location within the school building and not open area should be identified and prepared in the event that an off-site evacuation is not possible (Refer page 5 of <i>The Principal's Guide to Bushfire</i>).		
More than one suitable off-site location needs to be identified, in case one of the sites is under threat from the bushfire.		
Asset Protection Zone (20 metre radius), cleared of all rubbish, long dry grass, bark and flammable materials.	Tick	

Appendix B: Catastrophic Event Flow Chart

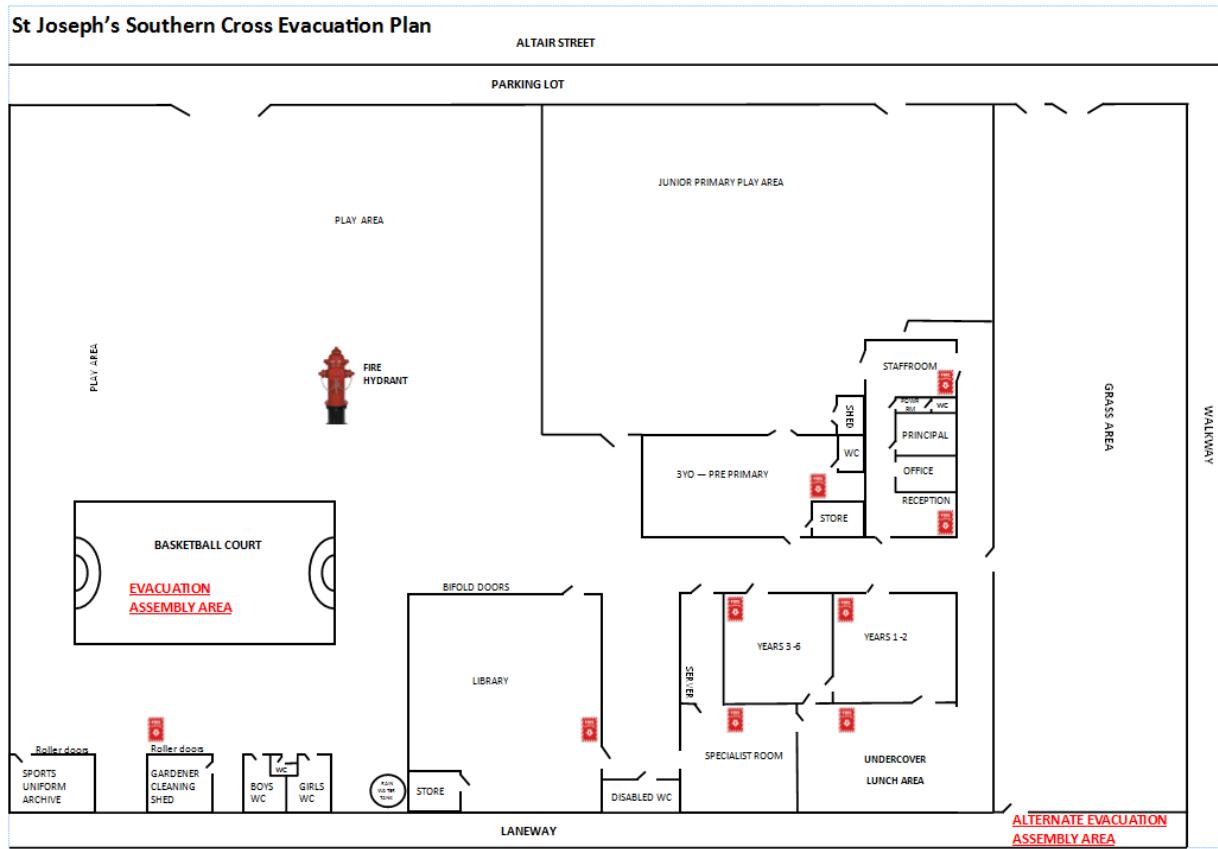
In the event of a catastrophic weather warning the **Bushfire Plan** will be invoked as per the following flow chart: (refer to *The Principal's Guide to Bushfire* for all procedures and sample letters)

PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSE TO Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating (FDR)

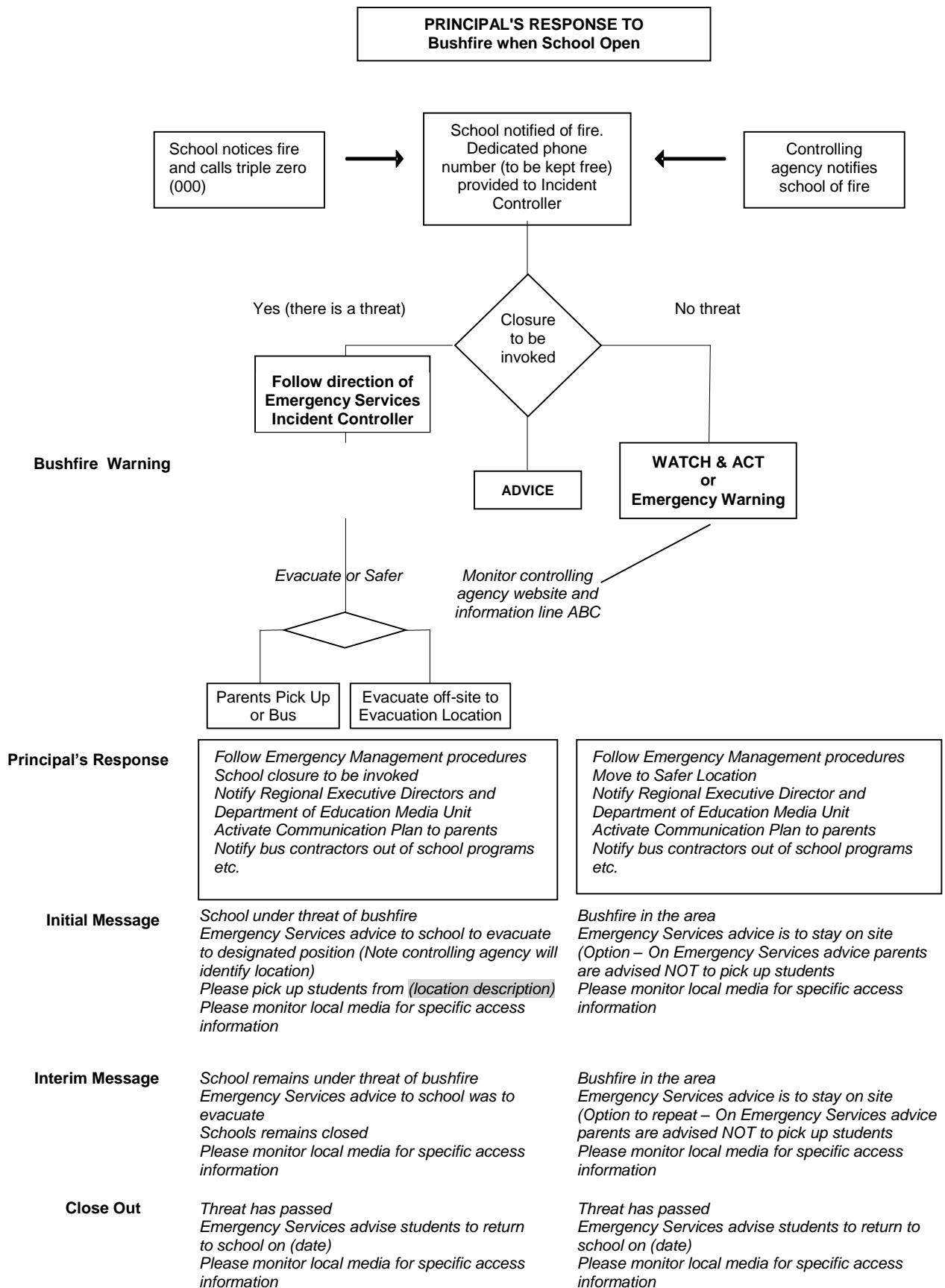


Appendix C: Sample School Site Plan and Evacuation Routes

Insert your school's map here – include the safer location/s, location of fire hydrants, electrical switch boards, phones and communication board, first aid and evacuation kits.



Appendix D: Communication Plan



Appendix E: Emergency Response Contact List



EMERGENCY CONTACT & PHONE NUMBERS		ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	
Police	Local: 08 9081 2100	Evacuation: Principal Invacuation: Principal	Siren/Pause x 3 or Continuous handbell Continuous siren or short whistle blasts
Ambulance / Hospital Local Ambulance	Local: 08 9081 2222 Two-way channel (if approp) 08 9049 1055 or 000	Checking Rooms	Principal/Admin
Fire	W: 08 9049 1350 M: 0427 491 297 Tony Dal Busco UHF (if appropriate) Emergency Services Coordinator 0427 957 206 Wayne Della Bosco	Marshalling Evacuation: oval Invacuation: classrooms	Teachers Teachers
Bus Contractors	Name: Ghooli Bus: Annette Luke 0439 909 028 Name: Marvel Loch Bus: Dianna Evans 0417 994 289	Communication	Principal/Admin
Power Outage (Horizon Power or Western Power)	13 13 51	Accredited FIRST AID Officers	Staff member Name(s) Mrs Petrina Pearce Mrs Lauren McGoldrick
Local Emergency Management Committee	Nic Warren 9049 1001 0407 491 027	Communication	Principal /Registrar
Poisons Information	131 126	Next of Kin Notification	Principal (Police if death)
School Improvement Advisor Name Dan Wood	08 9241 7551 mobile: 0428 093 348	Reporting and Review	Principal
PRINCIPAL	Name Rika Andres	Home: 08 9049 1767 Work: 08 9049 1046 Mobile: 0400 039 992	
ADMIN FINANCE OFFICER	Name Deborah Maddock	Home: 08 9047 5081 Work: 08 9049 1046 Mobile: 0447 475 084	
ADMIN REGISTRAR	Name Michelle Auld	Home: 08 9049 8014 Work: 08 9049 1046 Mobile: 0408 941 850	

In the case of an EMERGENCY
Call
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Appendix F: Communication Tree

