

## **BUSHFIRE POLICY**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

We believe that each child is a unique and precious gift from God that has been entrusted to us for their education, in partnership with the child's principle caregivers.

One of St Jakobi's primary responsibilities is to ensure that the children in our care are kept safe. The following protocols aim to ensure that safety is not compromised should the campus be attacked by a bushfire, or ember attack from a nearby bushfire.

### **RATIONALE**

As bushfires occur ever year, St Jakobi is responsible for keeping child safe should a bushfire threaten the school when children are present.

The process for emergency management as it pertains to bushfire is:

- prevention and mitigation of;
- preparedness for;
- response to;
- recovery from;
- review of emergencies and continuous improvement.

### **DEFINITIONS**

These are the definitions as explained by the CFS;

#### **Catastrophic**

- These are the worst conditions for a bush or grass fire.
- If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be extremely difficult to control and will take significant fire fighting resources and cooler conditions to bring it under control.
- Spot fires will start well ahead of the main fire and cause rapid spread of the fire. Embers will come from many directions.
- Homes are not designed or constructed to withstand fires in these conditions.
- The safest place to be is away from bushfire prone areas.

## Extreme

- These are very hot, dry and windy conditions for a bush or grass fire.
- If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be unpredictable, move very fast and very difficult for fire fighters to bring under control.
- Spot fires will start and move quickly. Embers may come from many directions.
- Homes that are prepared to the highest level, have been constructed to bushfire protection levels and are actively defended may provide safety.
- You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.
- The safest place to be is away from bushfire prone areas.

## Severe

- These are hot, dry and possibly windy conditions for a bush or grass fire.
- If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be hard for fire fighters to bring under control.
- Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety.
- You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.

## Bushfire Advice Message

*\*the flag indicates the location and severity of a fire on the CFS Warnings and Incidents page*

The CFS will issue a Bushfire Advice Message for bushfires that may pose a threat to property or public safety or events where:

- a bushfire has been reported and we are attending but no further information is available (Incident notification).
- a bushfire is producing an undesirable effect (smoke) in an area that may cause concern to the public
- the SACFS Regional Coordinator or State Coordinator wishes to advise the public of a specific event.

## Bushfire Watch and Act Message

*\*the flag indicates the location and severity of a fire on the CFS Warnings and Incidents page*

The CFS regularly issue Bushfire Watch and Act Messages for bushfires that pose a localised threat to property or public safety where:

- a bushfire is threatening or is a potential threat to public safety in the immediate area of the fire
- a bushfire is producing an undesirable effect (smoke) in an area that may cause concern to the public on a day of elevated fire danger
- the SACFS Regional Coordinator or State Coordinator wishes to advise the public of a specific event.

## Bushfire Emergency Warning Message

*\*the flag indicates the location and severity of a fire on the CFS Warnings and Incidents page*

Bushfire Emergency Warning Messages are the highest level of warning regarding a bushfire. They will be issued for wide area community impact when:

- an uncontrolled bushfire is burning under Severe to Catastrophic Fire Weather conditions; and
- the risk of loss of life or threat to properties is almost certain or has occurred; or
- where special circumstances exist and a message is approved by the State Coordinator for example when a life or house has been lost.

## POLICY PRINCIPLES

1. The safety and of students and staff during a bushfire on the Campus is the main priority
2. Parents and Caregivers will be communicated with as quickly as possible via SMS
3. External Policies and appropriate support services will be arranged as appropriate
4. The Principal or Teacher in Charge has the authority to make decisions consistent with the Plan

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to staff and students and parents/caregivers of Students at St Jakobi Lutheran Campus.

## **RESPONSABILITIES**

### **Principal**

- Ensure that staff and students are aware of this Plan and understand their responsibilities in relation to the Plan. resources are provided to support this policy
- That the Plan is communicated to Parents/ Caregivers annually and each parents signs the policy indicated an understanding of the Plan \*Appendix 1
- Ensure that compliance is enacted

### **All Campus Staff**

- Ensure an understanding of the Plan and communicate the Plan to students.
- Actively engage in fire drills

## **OTHER POLICIES APPLICABLE TO THIS POLICY**

1. Extreme Weather
2. Critical Incident

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** February 2019

**LAST POLICY REVIEW DATE:**

**NEXT REVIEW DATE:** February 2022

**\*Policy updated in consultation with Mr Neville Kies – Captain of Lyndoch CFS February 2019.**



## **BUSHFIRE POLICY -**

## **PROCEDURE**

In line with the fire rating given to other local places of education (Williamstown Primary, Lyndoch Primary, Lyndoch Valley Family Centre as found on the DECD website) and due to being in the Mt Lofty district, St Jakobi Lutheran Campus is seen as being in a high-risk area (R2 – Bushfire Risk Rating as associated with Bush Fire Attack Level-BAL).

### **Catastrophic Rating**

If CFS/DECD notify of Catastrophic fire rating at 4 – 4:30pm on the day prior, St Jakobi Lutheran Campus administration will therefore notify parents by SMS phone message service that afternoon, immediately following confirmation of the Catastrophic rating and to advise that the campus will be closed the next day. It is the responsibility of parents to make alternative arrangements for their children. Please be advised that CFS has requested, and the campus does not advocate, that children of any age be left home alone if campus closures occur, due to the high risk this poses.

Whilst a campus such as Faith may be open on a Catastrophic rated day, no buses will be permitted to travel through areas of high fire risk e.g. Lyndoch, Williamstown, Mt Pleasant, Birdwood etc.

Parents are expected to make use of the CFS website themselves to stay up to date with notifications of campus closures ([www.cfs.org.au](http://www.cfs.org.au) Click on “Warnings and Incidents” or news and media for up-to-date information on any current fires). Alternatively, parents are encouraged to listen to ABC 891 on a battery powered radio for incident updates.

As per DECD policy, in the rare event a day is changed to Catastrophic on the morning of that day, the campus will remain open, however an SMS text will be sent to request families to make alternative arrangements and not bring children to campus and to collect those already at OSHC.

### **Extreme Rating**

Due to several facts listed below, St Jakobi Lutheran Campus may also close on an Extreme rated day. A closure on an Extreme day would occur due to a combination of the following:

- Williamstown Primary is required to close i.e. their risk is seen as significant.
- There have been several days of hot weather in a row and the risks have become greater.
- Thunderstorms with lightning strikes are forecast
- Local fires are burning that may negatively affect the availability of the local CFS.
- There are significant fires in other areas, to which our local CFS members may have been deployed, reducing the amount available to defend St Jakobi in the event of a fire.

The following precautions will be put in place by the beginning of the campus day at the latest:

- All campus bags to be moved inside the classrooms.
- All moveable furniture, bins etc to be moved away from the outside of classrooms to open spaces.
- Large containers of water will be placed strategically around the campus and buckets, mops, hoses and protective clothing

will be placed in around the Library.

- Supply of extra water bottles taken to the Library
- Phones, battery powered radio, parent contact book, map of campus layout to be gathered together and placed in a designated, easy to access area.

On days of Extreme or Severe fire risk days Office staff will ring the Bushfire Information Hotline between 2 -2:30 pm and check the CFS website for an update on possible local fires. A decision regarding the bus run will be made at this time.

## **DURING SCHOOL HOURS**

Should a bushfire occur during normal school hours the following procedures will take place;

### **Bushfire Emergency Warning Message**

On receiving a "Bushfire Emergency Warning" message via SMS or email

- Keep children away from windows, which may break with exposure to extreme heat.
- Monitor the building for evidence of entry of fire.
- If a fire has passed through the area Principal and 4 designated campus staff will, as deemed appropriate in regard to safety, leave the Library with buckets and protective clothing to put out spot fires that may have developed. Remaining staff are to stay inside the Library with the students.
- All persons will remain in the Library until it is deemed safe by Principal (or next in authority) to exit the building/emergency services give a directive to leave.

### **Bushfire Watch and Act Message**

On receiving a "Watch and Act" message

- Staff, students and others currently on campus grounds will be moved to the Library.
- Take student drink bottles.
- If time, Admin staff to put a message on the answering machine before vacating building.
- Admin staff to bring a copy of map of layout of campus, water supply and areas of storage of flammable materials/chemicals for CFS plus a battery powered radio and parent contact book and phone.
- If time, use hoses/buckets/sprinklers to wet Library area, particularly side facing fire front, and other areas of campus.
- Take class rolls and cordless phones/mobiles phones into the Library.
- Staff to move shelving to provide extra protection for students.
- Remain calm, reassure students and encourage calmness from them.

### **Bushfire Advice Message**

On receiving a "Bushfire Advice Message"

- The campus will continue to monitor the situation and ensure above preparations and equipment are in place.
- Alert teaching staff
- Ensure student drink bottles are filled and regular toilet breaks given.

## **Campus notification**

Campus Administration will use both the CFS website ([www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)) and 891 ABC radio for updates. Administration may use a battery-operated or car radio to monitor 891 ABC. The CFS website and 891 ABC will be regularly monitored

throughout the day to track any bushfire activity.

## **Communication to Parents/ Caregivers**

Parents would be notified of campus closure in the usual way, via an SMS text. Parents have the option of keeping their children home on Extreme rated days if they so choose, particularly those who would need to drive through high risk areas to get to campus.

## **OHSC**

If a fire occurs before or after normal school hours, the above procedures will be complied with. All people on the campus grounds will be expected to comply with the directive to remain in the Library if there is any imminent danger. OHSC register will be used instead of roll books. Campus staff will put out spot fires if needed; OHSC staff will remain with the students. OHSC staff to set up communication with CFS/ambulance as applicable as soon as possible, and as soon as possible thereafter contact parents.

## **Administration requirements**

- Seek information – Bushfire Information Hotline on 1300 362 361, [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au), 891 ABC Radio
- Keep all students, staff and visitors safe – The library is the safer place. Ensure all people on site are present in the library.
- Communicate – Take the contact books, phones, radio. Try to let the community know we are safe and secure.

## **After fire front passes**

Principal and 4 designated teachers to monitor grounds for embers and spot fires etc

Admin staff to set up communication with CFS/Ambulance as applicable, and as soon as possible after this with parents. Parents will be encouraged not to travel through high fire risk areas to collect students. Staff will remain on duty until such a time as all students can be safely picked up.

When / if CFS arrives, provide info to CFS re layout of campus, water supply and a Dangerous Good Register

## **Travel Arrangements**

Should a fire be reported within a 30km radius of St Jakobi Campus, the campus bus will not operate towards fire alert areas, especially in the afternoon.

Students will be kept at the campus if a bush fire is within a 25km radius of the campus and they will be cared for by teaching staff until they are collected at whatever time is possible. Parents/caregivers/drivers are advised that they should not attempt to collect students, thereby putting themselves at risk, and that students will be properly cared for in a safe environment at the campus.

St Jakobi will comply with all directives made by CFS or other emergency services as they arise; this means that arrangements made during a time of emergency can change rapidly. Every endeavor will be made to keep the lines of communication open wherever possible.

Parents will only be able to take their children from the campus once they have notified their child's class teacher/OSCH supervisor. Prior permission must be given by parents for students to go home with someone other than their parents/caregivers.



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## BUSH FIRE ACTION PLAN 2019 - AUTHORISATION TO COLLECT STUDENTS

In the event of a bush fire I ..... (parent/caregiver FULL name)

Give permission for my child/ren listed below;

Surname:	
Child Name:	Child Name:
Child Name:	Child Name:

To be collected from St Jakobi by:

Surname:
First Name:
Contact Number:
Alternative Contact Number:

Parent/Caregiver Name: .....

Signed: .....

Date:.....