



# Work Safe Policies

## Bushfire Management Policy and Procedures

### BACKGROUND

We are committed to complying with our Work Safe requirements.

### PURPOSE

Bushfires are a natural and regularly occurring event in Australia. However, bushfires have the potential to cause catastrophic damage to property and loss of human life. It is therefore important to appropriately plan for bushfires and ensure that all reasonable measures are in place to minimise the consequences of the risks posed by bushfires. For measures to be taken in the event of a bushfire, refer to the Bushfire Plan and Bushfire Response Procedures.

### SCOPE

This Policy and its Procedures apply to all staff, volunteers and contractors at the school.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Campus Principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Bushfire Management Policies and Procedures.

The Campus Principal may seek support of senior staff members including members of the members of the St Joseph's Senior Leadership Team and other senior staff, as appropriate.

### SCHOOL'S POLICY

#### Bushfire At-Risk School

Schools listed on the [Bushfire At-Risk Register]

(<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/bushfirerisk.aspx>) have additional

obligations under the VRQA Guidelines on Bushfire Preparedness: Registered schools and school boarding premises, which are listed below.

St Joseph's is listed on the Bushfire At-Risk Register.

## **Managing Ignitable Materials**

Materials that may easily be ignited around our buildings and facilities must be regularly managed.

It is our policy that:

- we maintain a schedule for monitoring and removing of materials that may easily be ignited (including branches overhanging buildings, debris and rubbish around and under buildings, including gutters, and dry grass and vegetation)
- flammable materials are stored in accordance with our Hazardous Substances Policy and Procedures.

## **Emergency Access**

We must ensure that emergency access to our buildings and grounds is maintained at all times and regularly monitored.

It is our policy that:

- building exits are continuously kept clear of obstructions
- assembly points are designated and have appropriate access to emergency equipment
- there is access to facilities and grounds for emergency vehicles.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Emergency Management Plan**

In order to address the risks of bushfires, St Joseph's maintains a Bushfire Emergency Management Plan (EMP).

This EMP is developed in consultation with the Country Fire Authority/Metropolitan Fire, Emergency Services Board, and the local Council.

The EMP deals with:

- closing the Campus on Catastrophic Fire Danger Days
- preparations and actions to take on non-Catastrophic days, in the event of bushfire or elevated risk
- responding appropriately to instructions from emergency services.

A copy of our EMP is available in Sharepoint or can be provided by the Campus Principal or delegate..

Documents recording an annual visit, or documents evidencing consultation with local agencies are maintained by the Director Governance, Risk and Compliance.

## **Bushfire and Emergency Management Self-Assessment**

The CECV Guidelines strongly recommend that the Campus review their Bushfire and Emergency Management Self-Assessment on an annual basis, ideally as part of the preparation for bushfire season. It is recommended that the Campus retain this document each year for reference.

## **Catastrophic Fire Danger Days**

A Catastrophic Fire Danger Day is a day on which there is a Country Fire Authority Fire Danger Rating of Catastrophic in the relevant fire weather district.

Catastrophic is the highest rating of the four fire danger ratings. Catastrophic Fire Danger Days indicate conditions with the risk of fires that will destroy homes, buildings and structures. If a fire starts and takes hold in these conditions, lives are likely to be lost.

St Joseph's will close on Catastrophic Fire Danger Days. Arrangements for what will happen on a Catastrophic Fire Danger Day will be communicated in accordance with the Campus's EMP.

## **Communication**

The Emergency Management Plan is communicated to staff, young persons and parents/carers through:

- student enrolment
- staff induction
- other forms of communication deemed appropriate by the Campus Principal.

## **Staff Training**

The EMP requires staff to be trained on their specific roles and responsibilities in preparing for, monitoring and executing emergency bushfire procedures, including the effective operation of emergency equipment.

This training is organised by the Director Governance, Risk and Compliance and carried out each year.

## **Evacuation Procedures and Drills**

Evacuation procedures and drills are carried out in accordance with our Evacuation Procedures.

These drills involve all young persons and staff moving to a nominated on-site Shelter in Place or an off-site evacuation point, in accordance with the EMP.

## **Emergency Equipment Register**

The Campus maintains an Emergency Equipment Register.

During the October-April bushfire season, checks to ensure that the emergency equipment is in working order are carried out at least once per term, and the register is accordingly updated.

## **Notices of Bushfire Evacuation Procedures**

Notices of bushfire evacuation procedures and bushfire emergency contact numbers are located in appropriate and prominent areas around the Campus, including in:

- each classroom
- each staffroom
- reception.

## **Consultation with Local Agencies**

The Campus consults with local agencies where relevant (the Country Fire Authority, Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board, our local council) on our bushfire preparedness and compliance with local bushfire regulation of buildings, facilities and grounds.

## **Visitation Records**

The Campus maintains a record of annual visitation or consultation with local agencies.

## **Shelter in Place**

The Campus maintains a Shelter-in-Place building which is located Stay in classrooms. We consult with the relevant agency on the building's compliance with relevant regulations.

Documents certifying this compliance are maintained by the Director Governance, Risk and Compliance.

## **Records**

The Campus maintains records of:

- the provision of information on bushfire preparedness policies and procedures to staff (including relief staff) and parents/carers
- our closure arrangements for Catastrophic Fire Danger Days as per the Campus's Emergency Management Plan
- training of staff with specific roles and responsibilities in preparing for, monitoring and executing emergency bushfire procedures, including the effective operation of relevant emergency equipment
- the practice of evacuation procedures and drills at least once per term during the October-April bushfire season. St Joseph's evacuation drills must involve all young persons and staff moving to either a nominated on-site Shelter-in-Place or an off-site evacuation point as per our Emergency Management Plan.
- completion of the Bushfire and Emergency Management Self-Assessment.

## **Documentation**

This documentation is maintained by the Director Governance, Risk and Compliance and copies of all documents are stored in a central location on Sharepoint..

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Campus Principal is responsible for the effective implementation of this Policy.

## **BREACH OF THIS POLICY**

Where a staff member breaches this Policy, St Joseph's may take disciplinary action.

## **SOURCE OF OBLIGATION AND RELATED LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS**

The Victorian Registration Standards (sch 4 cl 12) require that we must ensure that the care, safety and welfare of young persons is in accordance with any applicable State and Commonwealth laws, and that staff are advised of their obligations under those laws. The VRQA Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration require the Campus to comply with the VRQA Guidelines on Bushfire Preparedness – Registered schools and school boarding premises.

## RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- [Hazardous Substances Policy and Procedures](#)

## RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

[School Maintenance Plan Template](#)

## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- [VRQA Guidelines on Bushfire Preparedness – Registered schools and school boarding premises] (<https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/schools/Pages/bushfire-preparedness.aspx>)

## POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Responsible Officer	Risk & Compliance Manager
Policy Owner	Director Governance, Risk & Compliance
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Superseded Documents	