



Bushfire Action Plan

VISION: *Clare High School is a learning community that inspires, supports and challenges every young person to engage in achieving success, fostering education, social development and wellbeing.*

First Developed: November 2007

Last Reviewed: March 2017

RATIONALE:

The Bushfire Action Plan Policy (BAP) has been developed to ensure that the members of the school community are well prepared in the event of a bushfire in the region. The Bushfire Action Plan Policy has been developed in conjunction with CFS 'Bushfire Action Plan' recommendations and DECD External Fire (Bushfire) Preparedness Safety Checklist and Compliance Audit and the Clare Country Fire Service. This Bushfire Action Plan has been developed using a DECD template.

AIMS:

- Protect and preserve life
- Protect and preserve property

GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. The BAP outlines required actions to prepare the site before the bushfire season and the building nominated as the site Safe Refuge.
2. The BAP also outlines activities to be undertaken by staff and students at the different levels of a bushfire emergency:
 - on Catastrophic – Code Red ratings
 - on days of Total Fire Ban
 - when there is a fire in the local district
 - when a bushfire is threatening or impacting on the site
 - during the period immediately after a bushfire has impacted on the site (known as the 'Recovery Phase')
3. The school Gymnasium is the nominated bushfire Safe Refuge for this site. It has been prepared for a bushfire emergency and will safely accommodate all persons normally on the site. Students, staff and visitors present at Clare High School will move to the Gymnasium when a bushfire threatens the site. The CHS Gymnasium is also the nominated Safe Refuge for members of the Clare Valley Children's Centre and members of Clare Valley Children's Centre.
4. The Principal/Delegate will forward a copy of the site BAP to the Clare CFS Brigade, DECD and school families each time an amendment is made to BAP.
5. The BAP is published annually.
6. The Principal/Delegate will include bushfire season reminders and information in site newsletters during term one and four. The Clare High School Information Booklet includes detailed information about actions and procedures included in the BAP.
7. All staff members receive BAP information/training each year through the role of the school's WHS committee. The Principal/Delegate will ensure that all new staff members, relieving staff and visitors are briefed about the requirements of the BAP during the site induction process.

PREPARING CLARE HIGH SCHOOL FOR A BUSHFIRE:

1. An Emergency Response Team has been established and members instructed on their roles and responsibilities. Their roles and responsibilities are detailed throughout the BAP. The members are:-
 - The Principal/Delegate
 - WHS Safety Officer
 - School Fire/Emergency Services Officer
 - School Groundsman
 - Any staff CFS volunteers
 - Student Services Officer
2. The Emergency Response Team will review the Bushfire Action Plan annually
3. The WHS Safety Officer will ensure that an emergency bushfire safety drill is carried out annually by students and staff
4. The Emergency Response Team will provide all staff and regular visitors with annual BAP training.
5. The Emergency Response Team has the nominated nearby townships and areas surrounding Clare, Spring Gully, Blyth, Armagh as the 'local district' in this BAP.
6. All staff members have been allocated roles and responsibilities at the various stages of the Bushfire Action Plan. These individual roles and responsibilities are included in later sections of the BAP.
7. The school Senior Admin Office will monitor local ABC radio for CFS Bushfire Information and Warnings Messages on days of high bush fire danger and pass on relevant messages to the Principal and other members of the Emergency Response Team.
8. An External Fire (Bushfire) Preparedness Safety Checklist and Compliance Audit will be completed annually. This document will be signed by the Governing Council, Site WHS Representative and The Principal. It will also be forwarded to DE for appropriate authorisation.
9. During a bushfire threat, the school siren will sound continuously. Staff and students will follow standard evacuation procedures moving efficiently to the Safe Refuge area (School Gymnasium). A portable pressure pack gas siren and spare gas canisters have been purchased for use in signalling a move to the Safe Refuge during periods of electricity blackout. It is stored in the Emergency Supplies kit located in the front office of the school.
10. During a bushfire evacuation, staff will follow standard evacuation administration procedures.
11. A Safe Refuge kit of emergency supplies is stored in the School Gymnasium. The kit contains a copy of the BAP and staff roles and responsibilities, important telephone numbers, street directory, battery powered radio, spare batteries, torch, first aid kit, gas siren and spare canisters, drinking water, sweets/nibbles, blankets, towels, duct tape, plastic sheeting etc. This kit is located in the equipment storage area of the gymnasium.
12. The kit is to be checked annually by the school's WHS committee to ensure contents are fresh and operational.

THE SAFE REFUGE:

1. The School Gymnasium is the nominated 'on site' bush fire Safe Refuge for use by Clare High School students and staff. The Safe Refuge has been clearly identified and signed. Students are reminded of the location during bushfire drills, and articles in the Parent Information Book and site newsletters reinforce the location of the Safe Refuge.
2. The Safe Refuge is a building of solid construction. All open spaces in the façade and roof have been sealed to prevent entry by embers and ash during a bushfire. This site has been assessed as being in an area of 'Moderate' fire danger. Windows in the building have been fitted with toughened glass.
3. The School Gymnasium can be easily and quickly reached from all areas of the site and safely hold the 600 persons normally present.
4. Students and staff practise using the Safe Refuge and moving to it from a number of areas around the site during emergency bushfire drills annually.
5. Blyth Road and the school car park which enters from it, allow easy access to the Safe Refuge by vehicles after an intense bushfire. An alternative entry point to provide vehicle access to the Safe Refuge will be through the school oval gate on Eastern Boundary (Jim Barry's Private Access Road) or entry to the school oval via Elliott Street.

6. Newsletter bushfire updates will remind families of the alternative entry point. Parents are advised in school publications to park cars on the school oval north of the Gymnasium and make their way to the school on foot when the area is declared safe by the Emergency Services.
7. It is likely that other members of the Clare community (including CVV) will shelter in the site Safe Refuge during a bushfire. To ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of all, students will remain seated with their class and roll class teacher
8. A safe 'Refuge' kit containing essential items for use during a bushfire emergency is found in the equipment storage area of the gymnasium. This kit also contains a fully stocked first aid kit.
9. Mains water, toilets and showers are supplied in the Safe Refuge area.
10. An Emergency Supplies kit has been assembled in a single container for ease of collection and transportation to the Safe Refuge by the Front Office SSO.
11. Student and staff medications have been listed, and are easily assembled and transported to the Safe Refuge by the Front Office SSO.
12. Student rolls and staff/visitor registers are readily available. SSO will accurately record :-
 - those present when the move to the Safe Refuge takes place
 - those who have left the site before the move
 - those who leave the site after the bushfire emergency has passed.
14. In order to ensure a safe and orderly operation, a decision to move all persons into the site Safe Refuge will be made at the discretion of the Emergency Response team when any of the following agreed 'triggers' are reached.
 - CFS Information and Warning messages broadcast on the local ABC radio indicate a fire is moving towards Clare.
 - The local Emergency Services advise that a bushfire is likely to impact on the site.
 - There is a confirmed sighting of nearby smoke or flame.
15. Staff, students and visitors will not be permitted to leave the Safe Refuge area until instructed to do so by the School Principal, Emergency Services Personnel or the Police.

CATASTROPHIC – CODERED ANNOUNCEMENT:

1. The school student services officer and/or the receptionist notifies all feeder schools to Clare High School via fax that a 'Catastrophic – Code Red' rating has been declared for the Mid North region. This fax requests that feeder schools notify bus families that all bus services will be cancelled for the following day
2. The school bus manager notifies all CHS families by email that a Code Red rating has been declared for the Mid North region and that all bus services have been cancelled for the following day.
3. The Leadership Support (ICT Coordinator / AP) notifies all CHS families by SMS text messaging that a Code Red rating has been declared for the Mid North region and that all bus services have been cancelled for the following day.
4. The Leadership Support (ICT Coordinator / AP) notifies all CHS staff and students by memo/email that a Code Red rating has been declared for the Mid North region and that all bus services have been cancelled for the following day.
5. The principal/delegate ensures that the Bushfire Emergency Response Team is prepared in the event of a bushfire.
6. The principal/delegate ensures that adequate supervisory/duty of care provisions are in place to ensure the safety/wellbeing of students is maintained in a Catastrophic – Code Red day.

TOTAL FIRE BAN DAY

1. The Principal/Front Office staff will inform students and staff in the 'Morning Notices' that a day of Total Fire Ban has been declared.
2. During the roll class, students will be reminded of site bushfire emergency procedures and drills and referred to laminated bush fire emergency posters displayed in all classrooms.
3. Students will be reminded of the procedures to be followed if a school bus is overtaken by a bushfire.
4. The school Senior Admin Officer will monitor ABC Radio for CFS Information and Warning Messages.
5. Student excursions away from the site may be cancelled for the day and rescheduled if the excursion destination and travel route are likely to be impacted by a bushfire.

6. Off site meetings for all staff may be cancelled if the meeting destination and travel route are likely to be impacted by a bushfire.
7. Staff members on yard duty will monitor weather conditions while students are on breaks or outside and report any concerns to the Principal/Delegate.
8. The container of Emergency Supplies kit will be prepared by the Front Office SSO and be ready for transportation to the Safe Refuge if required.
9. The Front Office SSO and First Aid SSO will update student and staff medication list and prepare medicines for transportation.
10. Grounds staff will check that pumps, sprinkler systems and grounds irrigation are operating correctly and hoses are attached.
11. All staff will ensure that all hazards (eg bench seats, bags etc) have been removed from passages and walkways and stored in a safe location.

FIRE REPORTED IN THE LOCAL DISTRICT:

1. If a bushfire has been reported in the nominated local district, (Blyth, Spring Gully, Clare, Armagh), the Principal/Delegate will inform students and staff of its location and to remain on bushfire alert.
2. The members of the site Emergency Response Team will be called together to put into place the pre determined bushfire emergency procedures. These team members will maintain a visual check of the surrounding area.
3. The school Senior Admin Officer will carefully monitor ABC Radio for CFS Information and Warning Messages and provide site leaders with updates concerning the latest location of the bushfire front and any impact it may have on the site.
4. The Principal/Delegate will advise the District Office that a bushfire has been reported in the nominated local district. The Principal/Delegate will liaise with local CFS Brigade to obtain the latest information and advice about likely effect of the bushfire on the site.
5. The Principal/Delegate will cancel on site outdoor activities for students.
6. The Front office SSO will identify and list all students and staff who live in the area reported to be affected by the bush fire. The Front Office SSO will record the names of any students who may be collected from the site by parents during the day. The Computing Technical SSO will back up all site computer records.
7. The Emergency Response Team will assess if it is safe for students to take outside recess and lunch breaks and notify all classes of their decision. The ER Team will assess if it is safe to release students from the site at normal dismissal time. If specific school bus routes or local roads are impacted upon or threatened by the bush fire, they will make arrangements to supervise the affected students until the Emergency Services report that the situation is safe to release them from the site.
8. Ground staff will prepare and test bushfire pumps, sprinkler systems and grounds irrigation systems. These personnel will turn on sprinklers and irrigation systems hourly to dampen surrounds and they will turn off all external gas cylinders.
9. The ER Team will check and prepare the Safe Refuge, close blinds and windows, wet towels, prepare drinking water, arrange appropriate locations for local community members, ready fire extinguishers, remove hazards from passageways etc.
10. All class teachers will encourage students to top up personal water bottles during the day so that they have adequate drinking water should a move to the Safe Refuge become necessary.
11. All class teachers will encourage students to assemble personal belongings (books, pencils, games, clothing, bags etc) and keep them close by should a move to the Safe Refuge become necessary. All class teachers will encourage students to use the toilet regularly during the day and all staff will undertake their assigned roles and responsibilities.
12. The Front Office SSO will alert visitors and volunteers of the situation during the registration process and advise them of action to take should a move to the Safe Refuge become necessary.
13. The ER Team will liaise with SAPOL, the school bus operator and school bus drivers to determine any likely impact of the reported bush fire on school bus routes.

14. School buses will not leave site unless a clear directive is given to the Principal by SAPOL or CFS Incident Management indicating bus routes are safe to travel. If a bush fire prevents school buses leaving the site or students from boarding public buses, the school staff will supervise students remaining on site until they are collected by parents.

FIRE IN IMMEDIATE VICINITY OR IMPACTING ONSITE:

1. The 'triggers' for a move to the Safe Refuge have been detailed above. All staff, students, visitors and parents are aware and prepared for the move that will take place when the 'triggers' are reached.
2. When a 'trigger' is reached, the agreed alarm signal or the gas powered siren will be sounded continuously by front office staff on the direction of the Principal/Delegate.
3. All students, staff and visitors will move to the Safe Refuge on hearing the siren or being informed personally by members of the ER Team.
4. All staff will assist students to move to, and assemble in, the Safe Refuge.
5. Grounds staff will turn on bushfire sprinklers and grounds irrigation systems only after determining that the task can be undertaken without placing themselves in undue danger.
6. Front Office Staff will notify parents via the pre arranged SMS mobile phone message that students are moving into the Safe Refuge. District Office will also be alerted that staff and students have been ordered to move to the Safe Refuge.
7. All staff will take the fire extinguishers with them from their classrooms to Safe Refuge. The fire extinguishers are to be placed on the floor inside the doorway on arrival.
8. Staff will close all doors and windows and turn off air conditioners as rooms are vacated.
9. The Principal/Delegate will ensure all site personnel are accounted for and in Safe Refuge. Classroom teachers will do a roll call of students in their care. Front Office SSO will monitor visitors and volunteers.
10. The Emergency Response Team members will institute search procedures for missing persons if needed. The Emergency Response Team members will liaise with CFS /MFS units and other Emergency Services if on site.
11. All persons sheltering in the Safe Refuge will prepare for arrival and passage of the fire front. The Emergency Response Team will :-
 - ensure all persons are located away from windows and unnecessary movement is limited.
 - provide regular updates at an appropriate level to students and adults
 - describe the situation that can be safely observed outside the building to all persons in the Safe Refuge.
 - assist all students and adults to remain calm.
 - outline possible plans of action after the front has passed with the students.
12. The Emergency response Team members will check for and attempt to extinguish spot fires in side or impacting on the Safe Refuge as necessary. It is not expected that they will undertake major fire fighting activities. They are not expected to put themselves in any dangerous situations.
13. All staff will undertake their assigned roles and responsibilities.

RECOVERY AFTER THE FRONT HAS PASSED:

1. The Principal will ensure no one leaves the Safe Refuge until the situation outside has been assessed as safe by the members of the Emergency Response Team or members of the Emergency Services.
2. The Emergency Response Team members will make an assessment of the need for, and if necessary begin preparations to care for students for an extended period of time.
3. Nominated staff members will remain on duty until all students are collected from the site by their parents.
4. Snacks, drinking water, blankets, games, books etc are available to meet immediate and extended needs of students waiting to be collected by their parents.
5. The Front Office staff will check for and treat any injuries.
6. The Emergency Response Team members will check the building for damage and burning embers and extinguish small fires in or near the Safe Refuge.

7. The Principal/Delegate will liaise with Emergency Services on site as soon as possible.
8. The Principal/Delegate will advise the District Office of the current situation as soon as the position becomes clear and it is safe to do so.
9. The Emergency Response Team members will determine if there is a need to evacuate the Safe Refuge.
10. The Emergency Response Team members will determine an alternative safe location if required.
11. All staff members will begin to reunite families at a safe location when the situation has been declared safe and vehicles can safely access the site.
12. The Front Office staff will record names of students and person collecting them as they leave the site.
13. All staff undertakes their assigned roles and responsibilities.
14. The Principal, Emergency Response Team, staff and students (where appropriate) will undertake a debrief of the bush fire emergency situation and the procedures undertaken at an appropriate time shortly after the incident.
15. The Principal will seek support for students and staff from counsellors and social workers when appropriate.
16. The Emergency Response Team will review the effectiveness of staff instruction undertaken before the bush fire emergency in light of the experience in order to ensure that lessons learnt are captured for future benefit.
17. The ER Team will arrange to have fire fighting systems checked and readied for use again.
18. The Front Office staff will replenish the Emergency Supplies package.
19. The Principal will arrange to have the appropriate authorities assess the safety of site buildings once the area is declared safe.
20. The Principal will complete the relevant report available from www.crisis.sa.edu.au

OTHER REFERENCES:

- Standard School Evacuation Policy / Procedures.

EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.

The school's Leadership Team and Governing Council last ratified this policy in...

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