

Beehive Montessori School Bushfire Plan



2023-2024

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In the case of an EMERGENCY Call 000

INTRODUCTION

This Bushfire Plan is for Beehive Montessori School and has been developed to assist the Principal and staff to prepare for a total fire ban, catastrophic fire danger rating, or a bushfire event.

This Bushfire Plan has been developed in accordance with the School's Bushfire Management Plan (Development Application- Additions to Educational Establishment conducted by RUIC Fire in May 2017), the School's *Critical Incident and Emergency Management Policy*, the Department of Education's *Principal's Guide to Bushfire*, AISWA's *Bushfire Management*, and the *Bushfire Recovery Kit* developed in collaboration with Department of Education, Catholic Education Western Australia and AISWA.

The Beehive Montessori School has over 200 students and 40 permanent staff. It is located on Curtin Avenue, Mosman Park, Western Australia.

Overview

General Information

Bush fires occur regularly in Western Australia often with little warning. Depending on a number of circumstances and conditions a bushfire may pose a threat to School property and more seriously to staff and students.

Typically, Western Australia's (WA) bushfire season in the south west starts in November and continues through to April. As climate and seasonal conditions change, bushfires in WA are becoming more common and the risks therefore associated are increasing.

This Bushfire Plan 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](#)) and the *Principal's Response to a Catastrophic Event Flow Chart* ([Appendix B](#)).

This Bushfire Plan 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;
- days deemed Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating;
- when there is a fire in the local district;
- when a bushfire has the potential to, or is actually threatening the school; and
- during the period immediately after a bushfire has impacted on the school (known as the 'Recovery Phase').

[Appendix C](#) shows the School Site Plan and Evacuation Routes, including the highlighted School Hall which is nominated as the **Safer Building Location** for the school. This building will accommodate all persons normally at the school.

Also highlighted is the beach carpark opposite the school which is nominated as an **off-site location**.

Key bushfire messages are incorporated into the Beehive Montessori School health curriculum and students and staff undertake drills as part of the school's emergency planning.

Communication Plans (including emergency contacts) are in place for evacuation or planned closure. See [Appendix D](#) for the Communication Plan and [Appendix E](#) for Emergency Response Contacts

Notice templates are included in [Appendix F](#).

Distribution

The Principal or delegated officer will:

- review (and update where appropriate) the Bushfire Plan on an annual basis;
- publish an up-to-date copy of the School's Bushfire Plan on the School's website no later than 31 August of each year;
- ensure that all new staff members, relieving staff and visitors are briefed about the requirements of the Bushfire Plan during their site induction process;
- include bushfire season reminders and information in newsletters;
- provide all staff members with pre-bushfire season updates during Term 3 and ongoing information and instruction about the contents and requirements of the Bushfire Plan during Term 4 and Term 1 staff meetings.

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

COMMUNICATION

Preparing for Bushfire Season

The Principal will ensure all students, staff (including relief) and parents are aware of the School's Bushfire Plan.

- The School has an effective working emergency alert system.
- The School has in place a system to account for students, staff and visitors in an emergency, including hard copy attendance records and visitor registers.

Pre-emptive Closure

- The Principal will notify staff and parents of closure using emergency contacts and School Stream where possible
- All other necessary parties will be advised, including, but not limited to, community users of the School facilities (including after school care, on site contractors, visitors and Board members).
- If appropriate, bus contractors will be contacted to arrange for the evacuation of students to a designated area.
- Notice of Planned Temporary School Closure will be posted both physically at the School and electronically on the website. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) is the final authority on advice on whether the School needs to close and when.

During Evacuation

- The School will contact parents via phone, School Stream 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 other users of the school site such as OSHC providers, and before and after school activity providers.
- The Principal communicates directly with authorities including any media communications. Staff should not comment directly to the media.

Reopening the School

- The Principal will be advised when the School can re-open.
- Parents will be informed when the School is re-opened.
- The *Notice of Planned Temporary School Closure* will be physically removed from the School premises and website.
- All parties that were advised of closure (for example, AISWA, OSHC providers, before and after school activity providers, School board members) will be advised of reopening.

TYPES OF FIRE EVENT

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

1. Total Fire Ban

The School will monitor <https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au/#totalfirebans> and in the event of a Total Fire Ban, the Bushfire Plan will be invoked. This means:

- no fires must be lit or used in the open air, including the use of bee smokers;
- 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.







*For information on activities that can or cannot be carried out during a Total Fire Ban visit <https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/hazard-information/bushfire/total-fire-ban>

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

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.

The Fire Danger Rating is based on the forecast weather conditions and provides advice about the level of bushfire threat on a particular day.

Category	Fire Danger Index (FDR)	Action
 Catastrophic	100+	Schools on Bushfire Zone Register closed on instructions. School to invoke Communication Plan.
 Extreme	75-99	Monitor Emergency WA & DFES websites Normal school operations <i>(any fire that starts is likely to be so fierce that even a well prepared and well-constructed school may not survive a fire).</i>
 Severe	50-74	Monitor Emergency WA & DFES website Normal school operations <i>(The threat of a bushfire increases)</i>
 Very High	32-49	Monitor Emergency WA & DFES website Normal school operations <i>(The threat of a bushfire increases)</i>
 High	12-31	Normal school operations <i>(The threat of a bushfire increases)</i>
 Low/Moderate	0-11	Normal school operations
<p><i>Guidance notes:</i> At each rating the fire behaviour and potential impact will be different. Check the FDR for the area by visiting the following links: https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au/#firedangerratings Further information can be obtained at: https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/hazard-information/bushfire/prepare#fire-danger-ratings</p>		

2.1 Planned Pre-emptive Closure

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.

Beehive Montessori School has communication procedures in place to provide this information at short notice or after hours.

Once advised of a pre-emptive closure, the School will inform the community that a closure is imminent. The Principal will send messages to parents and inform staff members 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 reduce the risk and the School can therefore stand down its Pre-emptive Closure Plans.

If advised, the Principal will make 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 will go 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.

2.2 During a Planned Closure

In order to make informed decisions, the Principal will stay informed of the current fire danger rating and any fire activity by monitoring a range of information sources

Including monitoring the following official sources:

- visiting the Emergency WA website www.emergency.wa.gov.au
- calling the DFES information line on 13 DFES (133337).
- listening to ABC radio, 6PR and other media news bulletins

2.3 Re-opening School

Parents will be informed when the Catastrophic FDR has been downgraded and that it is therefore safe for their children to return to School after a planned closure.

3. Bushfire

In the event of a bushfire threatening the School, the School will call 000. The Bushfire Plan will be invoked by way of the school alarm system.

3.1. Bushfire - Warnings

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

If the School is likely to be threatened by the fire, the Principal will activate the *Critical Incident and Emergency Management Policy* immediately.

Before a bushfire starts, Fire Danger Ratings can provide advice about the level of bushfire threat on a particular day and how difficult and dangerous conditions will be if a fire starts. They are based on weather conditions forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology.

During a bushfire, DFES will issue community alerts and warnings for bushfires that threaten lives and property. They are only issued once firefighters have arrived at the scene and determined that there is a threat or potential threat to the community. The alert level changes to reflect the increasing risk to life.

DFES will issue the following four bushfire warnings.

3.1.1



means a fire has started but there is no known danger. This is general information to keep you informed and up to date with developments.

Undertake regular checks and patrols of the School for bushfire activity.

3.1.2



means there is a possible threat to lives and property. Conditions are changing, you need to leave the area or prepare to move students, staff and visitors to their pre-determined Safer Building Location and not an open area on the site or evacuate.

If an order to evacuate is directed by the Incident Controller, the evacuation order will be relayed via a variety of official sources such as the DFES website and Emergency WA website. It is paramount that schools gather information pertaining to fires from official sources in order to make an informed decision on whether to stay on-site or evacuate off-site.

3.1.3



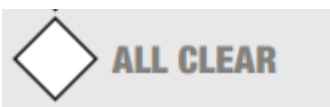
means you are in danger as your area will be impacted by fire. You need to take immediate action to survive.

You will be advised whether you can leave the area or if you must shelter where you are as the fire burns through your area. An emergency warning may be supported with a siren sound called the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS). These factors should be reviewed on a regular basis as they may change at any time and without notice.

If an order to evacuate is directed by the Incident Controller, the evacuation order will be relayed via a variety of communications methods including the [Bushfire Warning system](#).

It is paramount that schools gather information pertaining to fires from official sources in order to make an informed decision on whether to stay on-site or evacuate off-site.

3.1.4



means the danger has passed and the fire is under control, but you need to remain vigilant in case the situation changes. It may still not be safe to return to School.

Further information in relation to Bushfire Warning System is available on the DFES Website and a video is available at:

<https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/hazard-information/bushfire/prepare#alerts-and-warnings>

3.2. Bushfire – Act

3.2.1 Response when a bushfire starts and the school is open

3.2.1.1 Evacuation Procedure

If DFES advise that the School is required to evacuate off-site:

- All classes remain with their teachers and support staff.
- All other staff and visitors report to the administration building.
- Teachers account for each student and identify students with known respiratory conditions and access student medications accordingly.
- Doors, roof vents and windows must be closed **and air conditioners turned off**.
- The Principal will designate a staff members to act as Fire warden/s to manage evacuation routes and liaise with staff.
- Students and staff are to remain in classrooms until directed otherwise by the Principal or Fire Warden, or through the use of the evacuation alarm.
- The Principal and Fire Wardens will control the 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 advised **NOT** to pick up students and directed to monitor official communication channels for specific access information. See Appendix D and Appendix E Communication Plan and Emergency Response Contact List

3.2.1.2 Safer Building Location Procedure – if evacuation is not possible

- All classes remain with their teachers and support staff until otherwise advised by Principal or Fire Warden.
- School move to Safer Building Location ([Appendix C](#)) if the Principal cannot ascertain impact of a bushfire to school or on advice from DFES.
- Doors, roof vents and windows must be closed and **air conditioners turned off**.
- Principal or Fire Warden to monitor official communication channels to enable informed decisions to be made.
- All classes to remain within the designated Safer Building Location. See [Appendix C](#).
- All other staff and visitors report to the administration building, before directed to the Safer Building Location.
- Teachers account for each student and identify students with known respiratory conditions and access student medications.
- 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 advised **NOT** to pick up students and directed to monitor official communication channels for specific access information. See [Appendix D](#) and [Appendix E](#) Communication Plan and Emergency Response Contact List

3.2.2 Response when a bushfire starts and the school is closed

The Principal is to notify staff and parents of the closure using the Emergency Response Contact List (see [Appendix D](#))

3.2.3 Recovery

The priorities for the school during recovery are:

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

General

- Where 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 when there has been no direct impact) 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.
- Manage administrative details including insurance.

Debrief

- Report Critical Incident to the Director General in accordance with the [Critical Incidents and Emergency Management Policy](#)
- What worked, what didn't?
- Was anything overlooked?
- What could be done better next time?
- Should any delegation be reassigned?
- If changes are made, incorporate them into the Bushfire Plan and advise the appropriate parties including staff and other authorities.
- Share the knowledge with other schools.
- Test the revised Bushfire Plan and procedures.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Bushfire Preparation and Actions Checklists

1. Annual Preparation:

Principals are responsible to ensure this checklist is completed annually and should be thoroughly familiar with their current plans for dealing with bushfires.

MANAGEMENT AND PREPARATION ACTIVITIES		
Mark when task has been completed, or write NA if not applicable		When
Has the school checked the Bushfire Zone Register	X	<i>December 2023</i>
Principal has reviewed and is thoroughly familiar with the school's Bushfire Plan and the Critical Incident and Emergency Management Policy	X	<i>Term 4 2023</i>
Students, staff, relief staff and parents/carers have been made aware of the School's Bushfire Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff meeting • Newsletter • Website 	X	<i>Term 1 2024</i>
Communication plans are in place for directed evacuation or planned closure	X	Ongoing
Evacuation drills practised prior to the start of the bushfire season and at once per term during the bushfire season, typically from late August to April in southern WA	X	Ongoing
School has a correctly functioning alert system.	X	Ongoing
Emergency communications equipment is available e.g. mobile telephones.	X	Ongoing
Class attendance and visitor register are readily accessible in an emergency to account for students, staff and visitors.	X	Ongoing
First aid equipment is available and staff members trained in first aid have been identified.	X	Ongoing
Evacuation kit should be checked at least once per term.	X	Ongoing
Procedures are in place to restrict use of machinery in close proximity to bushfire fuels where they may start a fire on severe Fire Danger Days.	X	October to April
A Safer Building Location from within the school buildings has been identified. The Safer Building Location is not an open area and the school has processes in place to ensure the building is ready for use in a bushfire emergency. The Safer Building Location is to be used when it is the safest option or in the event that an off-site evacuation is not possible. The school's Safer Building Location is: HALL	X	Ongoing
Defendable Asset Protection Zone (20-27 metre radius from buildings) is maintained throughout the year, clear of all rubbish, leaf litter, long dry grass, bark and flammable materials.	X	August to April

Bushfire Zone Register Schools: Check List for Action

Upon Declaration of Pre-Emptive Closure

Tick when task has been completed

The Bushfire Plan is activated immediately upon declaration of pre-emptive closure.	
All necessary people informed:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools in close proximity; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents, including making provision for parents from diverse backgrounds (e.g. multicultural, special needs); 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any staff, (including part-time staff), students, volunteers and parents of students who are absent today; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors planning to visit school on the day of planned closure; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Board; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External users including before and after school activity providers, and OSHC providers; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School contractors (grounds maintenance, cleaners), and 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building construction workers. 	
Notice of Planned Temporary School Closure signs placed on the main notice boards, at the front of the School, on main administration entrance doors, and other entry/exit doors throughout the buildings.	
If safe to do so on the day of the planned closure, two staff members (usually Principal and one other) to be at the School from 8.00am - 10.00am to communicate with any School community members who attend. On departure, secure the facility and activate the electronic security system at 10.00am	
Chair of the Board informed of actions taken, and report to Director General as a Critical Incident if necessary.	
Fire danger ratings or fire activity monitored (local media - television and radio, especially ABC Local Radio: 13 DFES (13 33 37) and Emergency WA)	Ongoing
If plan to close is reversed, Notice of Planned Temporary School Closure signs removed from the main notice boards, the front of the school, on main administration entrance doors and other entry/exit doors throughout the buildings.	

Bushfire Zone Register Schools: Check List for Action

Prior to Leaving before the Day of Closure

Tick when task has been completed

BUSHFIRE ALERT Notice of Temporary School Closure sign placed on the main notice board, at the front of the school, on main administration entrance doors and other entry/exit doors throughout the buildings.	
Notice of Temporary School Closure notice placed prominently on school website.	
Turn off air conditions and close doors.	
All money removed from the premises.	
Expensive items of equipment secured.	
Data backed up and at least one copy (preferably two) taken off-site.	
All non-essential electrical equipment switched off (leave on server, router and alarms).	
School premises secured and security system activated.	
School security contacted (Monitoring Station 1300 627 526 and/or 9313 1881) prior to departure, to confirm that all security systems have been armed and the site secured.	

Bushfire Zone Register Schools: Check List for Action

On the Day of Closure

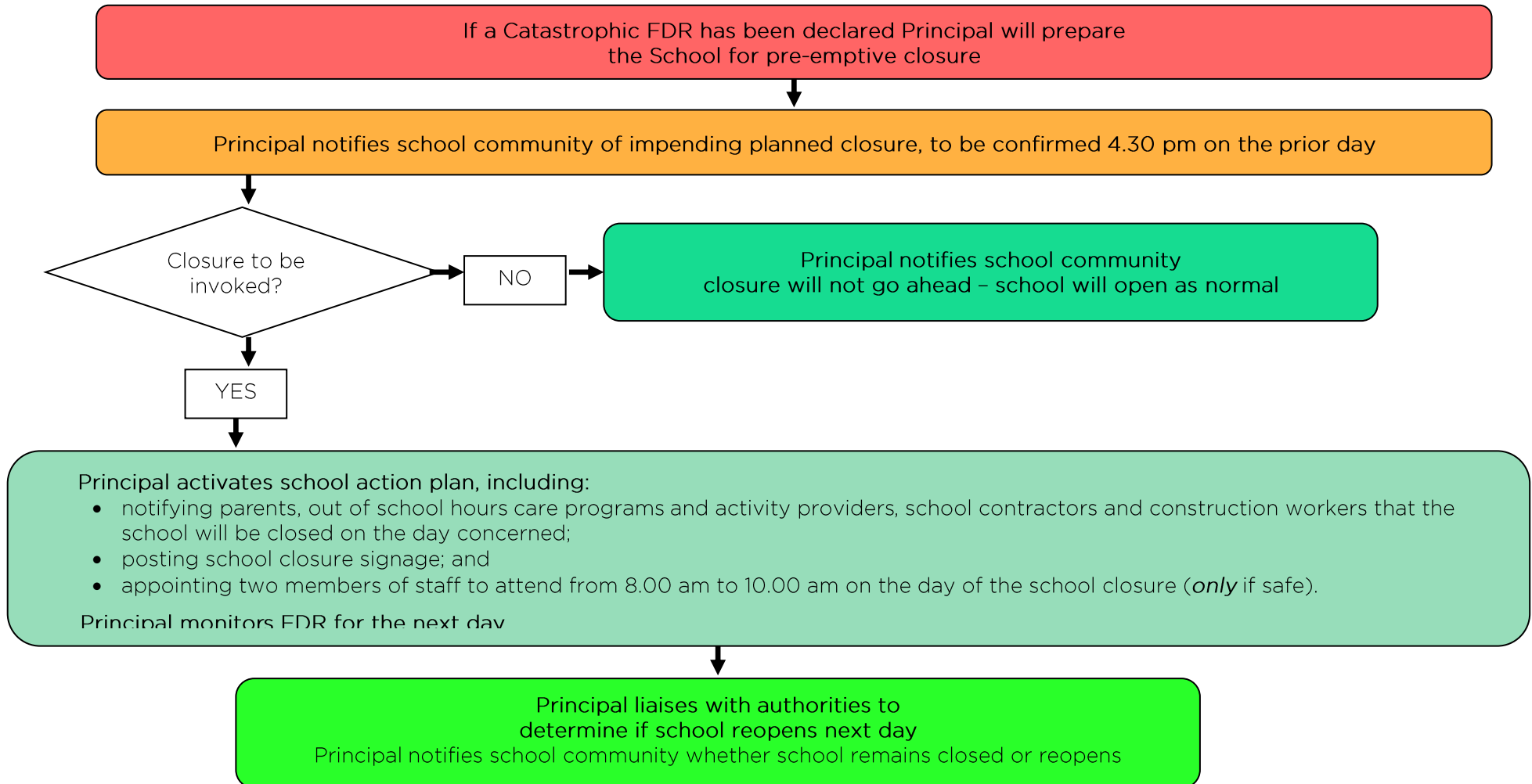
Tick when task has been completed

Principal liaison with Chair of the Board maintained	
Turn off air conditioners. Close roof vents and doors.	
Media enquiries directed to the Principal	
Fire danger ratings or fire activity monitored (local media – television and radio, especially ABC Local Radio: 13 DFES (13 33 37) and Emergency WA .)	
When advised to either re-open or remain closed the following day, all necessary people informed:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools in close proximity 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents, including making provision for parents from diverse backgrounds (e.g. multicultural, special needs); 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any staff, (including part-time staff), students, volunteers and parents of students who are absent today; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors planning to visit school on the day of planned closure; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Board; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External users including before and after school activity providers, and OSHC providers; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School contractors (grounds maintenance, cleaners), and 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building construction workers. 	
Notice of Temporary Closure notice on school website updated or revised to advise school reopens tomorrow.	
When school reopens, BUSHFIRE ALERT Notice of Temporary School Closure signs removed from all doors and main notice board.	

Appendix B: Catastrophic Event Flow Chart

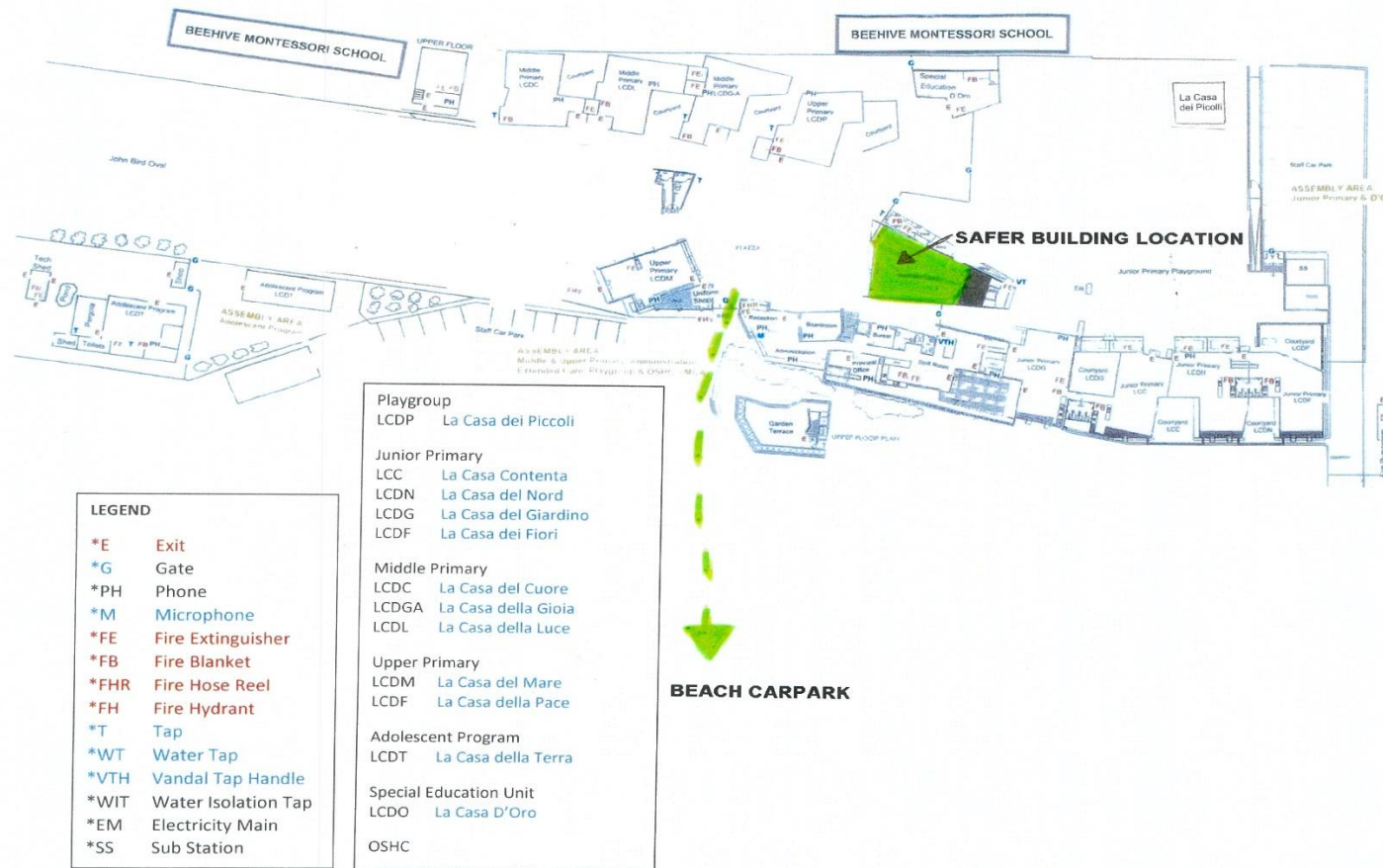
In the event of a catastrophic weather warning the Bushfire Plan will be invoked as per the following flow chart:

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

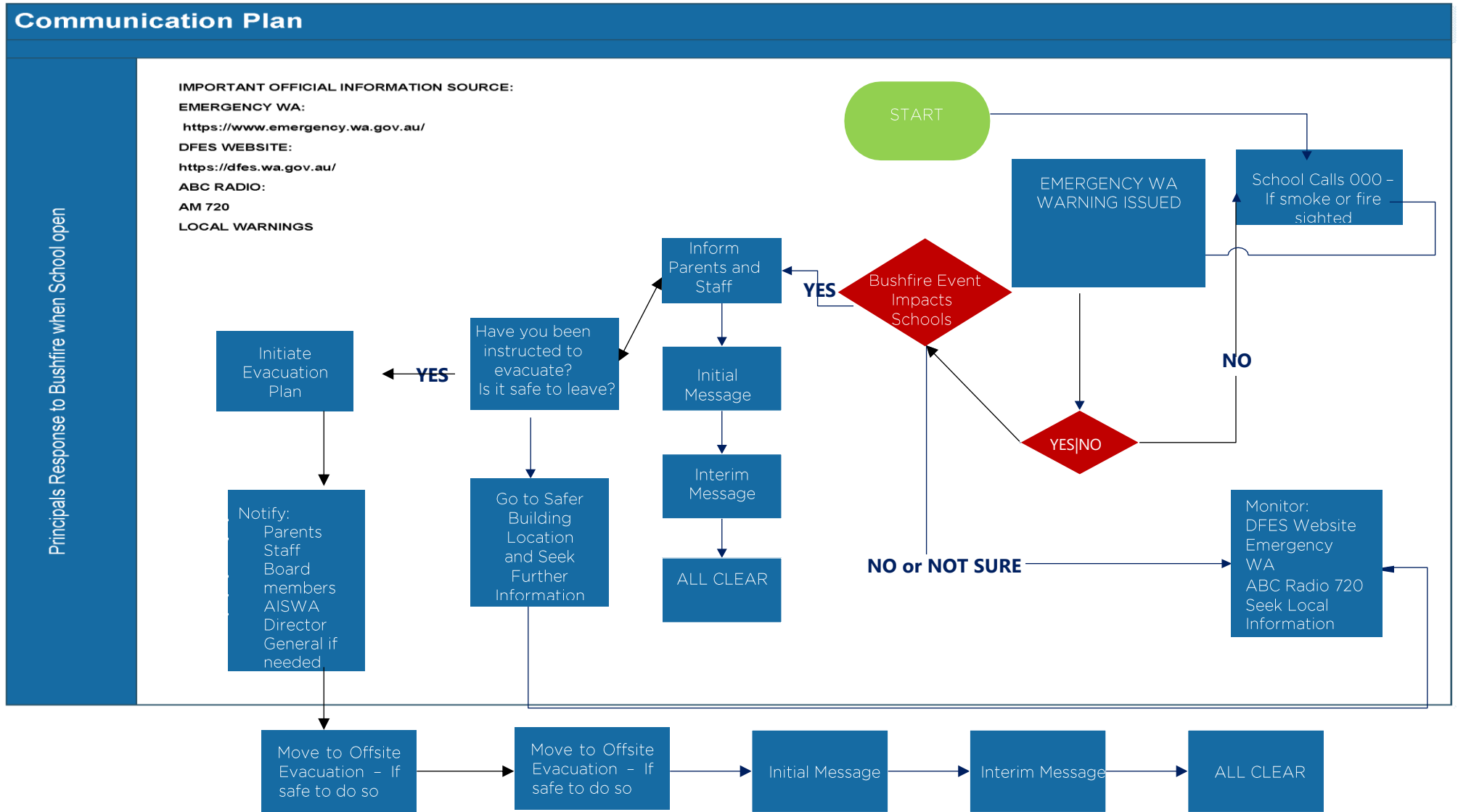


Appendix C: School Site Plan and Evacuation Routes

School safer location/s, and location of fire hydrants, electrical switch boards, phones, first aid and fire evacuation kits.



Appendix D: Communication Plan



Appendix E: Emergency Response Contact List

Assess  Evacuate  Inform  Organise  Undertake

EMERGENCY CONTACT & PHONE NUMBERS		ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	
Police	Local: (08) 9286 7777	Siren or short whistle blasts	Evacuation: Principal Invacuation: Principal
Ambulance / Hospital (Sir Charles Gardiner)	Local: (08) 6457 3333	Checking Rooms	Principal and or designated Fire Warden
Fire (Claremont Fire Station)	(08) 6478 9610	Evacuation: on-site assembly point when safe to evacuate off-site Invacuation: classrooms	Teachers Teachers
Power Outage	13 13 51 or https://www.westernpower.com.au/faults-outages/power-outages/	Accredited First Aid Officers	Teachers
State Emergency Service	132 500 for SES emergency assistance 13 3337 for emergency information	Communication	Principal
Poisons Information	131 126	Next of Kin Notification	Principal
PRINCIPAL Bronwyn Hope 93831283			

**In the case of an EMERGENCY
Call 000**

Appendix F: Notice of Planned Temporary School Closure

Please be advised that as a result of a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating forinsert date..... It is planned to temporarily close this school on that day.

The final decision to close the school will be confirmed with the Principal no later than 4.30pm on the If conditions have improved sufficiently by that time, the school will open as normal on If not, closure will go ahead.

For further information please contact the Principal on admin@beehive.wa.edu.au

Thank you for your cooperation

Template letter to parents confirming pre-emptive closure

BUSHFIRE ALERT -CONFIRMATION OF TEMPORARY SCHOOL CLOSURE

Dear Parents

The planned pre-emptive closure of Beehive on.....insert day, date of planned closure..... of which I advised you on **will** go ahead as planned. The Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating for that day has not changed, so the safest option remains to close the school for the day.

It is anticipated that the school will only be required to close for the single day, but this will depend on the weather. The school website will contain a notice to advise you of the current status of the school closure and when it is expected to reopen.

I ask that you monitor local media for current information about fire danger ratings and notification of schools reopening.

Staying tuned to ABC Local Radio in your locality is advisable. You can also check with Fisa on 1300 657 209 or www.fesa.wa.gov.au.

Alternatively you can call me on

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work to make our school as safe as possible for your children.

Template letter to parents reversing pre-emptive closure

BUSHFIRE ALERT -REVERSAL OF TEMPORARY SCHOOL CLOSURE

Dear Parents

The planned pre-emptive closure of Beehive Montessori School onof which I advised you onwill **not** go ahead. The Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating for that day has been downgraded. Accordingly, the school will open and operate as normal.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work to make our school as safe as possible for your children.

Draft text for newsletter

Bushfire Zone Register

Beehive Montessori School is included in the Bushfire Zone Register along with the land to the east and north of the school. Inclusion on this register means that the school may be required to invoke pre-emptive closure on a day for which a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating (FDR) has been declared for the Town of Mosman Park. A Catastrophic FDR means that if a fire starts, it is likely to be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving.

What does this mean for our School?

When given advance warning by DFES that a Catastrophic FDR has been forecast for a given day, Beehive may be directed to invoke a pre-emptive closure. If the School receives such a direction, you will be informed of the possible planned closure via School Stream.

The final decision to pre-emptively close the school will be confirmed by the Principal no later than 4.30 pm on the day before the declared day. If the forecast changes after that deadline, the closure will stand, regardless of improvements to the weather conditions later in the afternoon or overnight. The intention is to limit confusion or uncertainty for parents and to allow you ample time to make alternative child care arrangements.

Parents will be advised of the confirmation of closure, or its reversal, via School Stream.

How will I know when the School is reopening?

It is anticipated that the School will only be required to close for a single day at a time, but this will depend on the weather. Parents will be kept up to date with any changes via School Stream, and the School website will contain a notice to advise you of the current status of the closure and when it is expected to reopen.

I ask that you monitor local media for current information about fire danger ratings and notifications. Staying tuned to ABC Local Radio in your locality is advisable.