Tharawal Primary School

Response Procedure for Bushfires

The Department of Education and Communities has rated Tharawal Primary School as being in a bushfire prone area. This means that the school is required to prepare and plan for the bushfire season, review the school’s Emergency Management Plan and ensure that plans are in place in the event that the school is required to respond to a bushfire emergency during the school day. The school may also be required to close at the direction of emergency services and in consultation with the Director, NSW Public Schools in the case of a local bushfire hazard.

The Fire Danger Rating forecast will be monitored by the school throughout the bushfire season and any advice regarding bushfire hazards, in the local vicinity, provided by the local authorities will be acted upon.

Information about emergency management will be provided to parents and carers prior to and during the bushfire season to ensure that they are reassured that the school is prepared in the event of a bushfire hazard. This information will include advising that students will not be dismissed from school during an evacuation, on route to the off-site evacuation point and only to the care of an authorised person/parent or carer from the evacuation point. This is to ensure that all students are accounted for.

The direction from the NSW Department of Education and Communities is that schools which are rated bushfire prone will continue to operate regardless of fire weather ratings during the year. Schools will monitor conditions during the bushfire season, particularly when there is bushfire in the area. Tharawal Primary School will act accordingly to this advice.

In the event of Tharawal Primary School being declared non-operational (closed) for safety reasons prior to the next school day commencing, the following measures will be put in place:

- Principal or nominee will notify parents, staff, BASC coordinator and any community users of the school site via SMS
- Bus company will be notified
- Signs will be displayed on the gate entrances of the school at the front of the school (Gerald Rd), Grass B (Blaxland Drive) and the Black path indicating that the school is non-operational (closed).
- Parents/carers are to take responsibility for their children.
- Parents should also listen for warnings on the news and may monitor the rural fire service website for additional information. www.school.rfs.nsw.gov.au. It is important to note that Tharawal Primary School follows weather forecasts for the Greater Sydney Metropolitan area.
- Where students arrive at school without parents/carers, staff will contact the parents/carers to collect their child(ren) from the school.
- The school staff will remain on site whilst safe to do so (with any students still at school) and then evacuate to a specific location when directed by emergency services.
- Staff will be at school gates if safe to do so.
- Once an SMS is sent to declare the school non-operational (closed) due to bushfire conditions the school will remain closed until further advice is sent via SMS.
In the event that the mobile phone messaging service fails to operate parents will need to rely on Rural Fire Service and the media to obtain information. In areas with poor mobile network coverage, parents will be required to be extra vigilant.

**Before the bushfire season the school will:**
- Review and update the emergency management plan, which will include a bushfire evacuation plan.
- Conduct fire evacuation drills.
- Arrange for contractors to clear gutters of dry leaves and other debris.
- Ensure that all items that may be flammable such as door mats and garbage skips are locked or put away prior to leaving the school premises unattended.
- Have firebreaks maintained and garden rubbish, native shrubs and tree branches kept well clear of buildings.
- Liaise with emergency service agencies about emergency procedures or vegetation management in the vicinity of the school and any other issues that are appropriate.
- Ensure staff are familiar with bushfire response procedures.

**During the bushfire season**
- During the bushfire season, the school listens to the local radio station and/or monitors the NSW Rural Fire Service for information about bush fire activity.
- The school will cooperate with the NSW Rural Fire Service and NSW Fire and Rescue as they work with the Local Emergency Management Committees to plan for managing bushfire risk and activity or follow their instruction during a bushfire event.
- If bushfires are burning the Principal will discuss the school’s specific circumstances with local emergency service agencies and the Director NSW Public Schools.
- If there is a threat of bushfire, the Principal will contact emergency services and seek urgent advice. Where required, the school will implement their Emergency Management Plan.

**In the event of the requirement to evacuate during the school day**
- Decision to evacuate to an off-site location is made by the Principal in consultation with emergency services and the Director NSW Public Schools or if directed by emergency services.
- Principal will contact the bus company prior to evacuation.
- Staff and students evacuate to school assembly point if safe to do so and then to offsite point.
- **First aid kits, Epipens, asthma and diabetes medication and health care plans should be taken with staff to off-site evacuation site.**
- All staff/contractors/visitors should be accounted for.
- Sign left on gate to advise of evacuation (if possible) and location of off-site location point.
- Students will only be released to identified/authorised person/parent/carer from off-site evacuation point.

**Evacuation Procedures**

**Chief Warden**
Sue Roach to meet with:

**Deputy Chief Wardens:**
- Julianne Paton (Block E & G)
- Alison Brown (Block D & F)
- Sally Kelly (Block B & C)
- Tracy Stewart (Block A)
**Evacuation Plan**

1. The evacuation bell (repeating upward rising sound) will ring
2. Stop work
3. Line up at the door
4. Leave property behind
5. Teachers take class roll and keys
6. Turn off lights and computer
7. Teachers shut door
8. Quietly leave the building with the teacher
9. Walk to Grass B (Evacuation point 1). If unsuitable move to evacuation points 2 or 3
10. Sit in class lines, teacher to call roll and report to Stage Executive. (Deputy chief wardens)
11. If students are to leave the school they will do so via Gerald road exit and buses will be waiting at the bus stop.

**Staff**

If the school is required to close prior to the commencement of the school day and the staff are unable to attend the school site, staff should act as directed by the Principal or Director NSW Public Schools. The options will be:

- Remain at home.
- Travel to the nearest DEC school or NSW Public Schools office that is open and report on duty.
- All staff should contact the Principal to advise of the location from where they are working or if they are taking leave.

**Cleaning staff/Contractors**

Cleaning staff should cooperate with the direction of the Principal in the event of an evacuation.

Cleaning staff need to contact their employer and have an agreed plan in place where there is a need for an evacuation outside of school hours.

**Community Users of the site**

These users will need to have an emergency management plan in place. The plan should clearly indicate a communication plan that shows that they need to monitor local bushfire conditions. Community users communicate with the Principal if they are aware of a local fire event which may impact on the operation of the school. They also need to be aware that if there is a school closure the school remains closed until they are notified by SMS or phone that it is open. Community users must provide a mobile number to the school office and this information must be kept current.

**Evacuation Assembly Areas and Evacuation Routes**

**Designated Assembly Points**

Assemble on Grass B (assembly area 1) or COLA (assembly area 2) and move to the offsite evacuation point as directed by emergency services.
Evacuation routes to Grass B are clearly marked on a school map known by all staff and located in the staffroom, administration area, all rooms and a copy is held by all members of the executive.

The evacuation procedure routes will be rehearsed as per Department of Education and Communities requirements.

**Transport Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Transport</th>
<th>Company Name / Private Vehicle Owner Name</th>
<th>Phone / Mobile Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>Veolia</td>
<td>02 87000 555</td>
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**Emergency Contacts**

- NSW Rural Fire Service - 000
- NSW Fire Brigade - 000
- NSW Police Force – 000
- Bush Fire Information Line- 1800 679737
- NSW Rural Fire Service Website:  www.rfs.nsw.gov.au
- Sutherland Shire Council – 9710 0333
- State Emergency Service - 000
- NSW Ambulance Service - 000
- Sutherland Hospital – 9540 7111
- Department of Community Services (DOCS) – Head Office – 9716 222 or 132111 to report suspected abuse or neglect.
- DEC Safety and Response Hotline  1300 363 778
- DEC Miranda Office  02 9531 3900
- DEC WH&S  02 9266 8955
- DEC Safety and security Directorate  1300 880 021

Note: All fires are to be reported to 000

**If the organised movement of students to a safe location is judged to be impossible, the following procedures should be followed:**

- Direct students and staff to move to the school hall where lockdown procedures will be put into action.
- This action will remain in place until the threat has passed or authorities have instructed the Principal to do otherwise.
- Parents will not be able to collect their children from school until the emergency has passed as emergency vehicles have top priority accessing the area.
- When the threat has passed, the students and staff should leave the building in an orderly manner by the nearest, safest exit and assemble away from the initial exposure area.
- A roll call should be conducted in a safe area away from the building. The visitor’s book should be used in accounting for the safety and evacuation of all visitors.