



CHRYSALIS STEINER SCHOOL

educating the whole child

Bushfire Preparedness Policy, Guidelines and Procedures

Policy

Chrysalis School acknowledges the heightened risk of bushfire affecting its Thora campus and camps. The School will ensure it is appropriately prepared to protect the safety of students, staff and visitors, as well as the integrity of the School's facilities.

The School will ensure the following:

1. Clear guidelines to respond to bush fire risk are prepared and published to the School Community.
2. A bushfire response is part of its Critical Incident Management Plan, and that such a scenario will be practiced on an annual basis to ensure staff and students are familiar with procedures.
3. The School's facilities will be maintained to reduce the impact of bushfire.
4. Camps will not be conducted in areas exposed to heightened bush fire risk.

Risk Factors

The School's response to bush fire risk is determined by its location.

The most significant issue facing the School is access via a single road. In the event of Darkwood Road becoming blocked between the School and Waterfall Way, the evacuation of students, staff and visitors becomes problematic. Access to Bellingen is still possible further along the valley and exiting via the Orama Road fire trail, however, in the event of fire, travel along ridge tops is highly dangerous and therefore prohibited. Further, the usability of the fire trails for bus transport cannot be assumed.

Dorrigo area students are also vulnerable to blocked access up the escarpment, along Waterfall Way.

This means the School must build its response on the following strategies:

1. **Avoidance** – School is closed in periods of immediate and heightened bush fire risk. Any significant risk of students and staff being trapped at the Thora Campus, or whilst on camps, is to be avoided.
2. **Minimisation** – The School actively monitors the bush fire situation in times of heightened risk and is prepared to implement its Critical Incident Management Plan. The School will act early to evacuate the Campus.
3. **Preparedness** – The School maintains appropriate asset protection zones and areas of refuge, and builds facilities according to bush fire standards.

Due to our proximity to Coffs Harbour, it is assumed Emergency Services would be equipped to support the provisioning of the School by air in the event of students and staff becoming trapped. Therefore, no stocking of food or blankets is deemed necessary.

Dorrigo students impacted by the closure of Waterfall Way (only) would need to be billeted among Bellingen families. This would be managed by the Business Operations Manager in consultation with the Administration Team.

Guidelines

The primary source of information in respect to bushfires is the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS).

Additional information and advice is to be sought from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), where camps are subject to heightened bushfire risk.

The School's response to bushfire risk will be determined by the RFS Bush Fire Danger Ratings forecast the previous day for the North Coast area and be as described in the following table.

Bush Fire Danger Rating	Risk Response
Catastrophic	On days rated Catastrophic or Extreme School will be closed.
Extreme	No camps allowed in areas rated catastrophic or extreme.
Severe	On days rated Severe or Very High . . .
Very High	<p>If a fire is active in the Bellinger or Kalang catchments, the Business Operations Manager shall seek advice from the Coffs Harbour Bush Fire Control Centre (P 6659 7800) or RFS State Operations (1800 737 677) as to whether the School shall open.</p> <p>If there is no active fire in either of Bellinger or Kalang catchments, the Business Operations Manager shall monitor the RFS Fires Near Me website and liaise with the Coffs Harbour Bush Fire Control Centre (P 6659 7800) or RFS State Operations (1800 737 677) as appropriate.</p> <p>No camps allowed in areas rated severe or very high unless in close proximity to areas of refuge.</p>
High	<p>The Business Operations Manager shall monitor the RFS Fires Near Me website and liaise with the Coffs Harbour Bush Fire Control Centre (P 6659 7800) or RFS State Operations (1800 737 677) as appropriate.</p> <p>The Business Operations Manager will liaise with the NPWS to obtain advice.</p>
Low/Moderate	The Business Operations Manager will respond to incidents as they become apparent.

Procedures

Monitoring

The Business Operations Manager will be aware of the Bush Fire Danger Rating for the School and areas in which camps are being conducted.

Response to forecasts and warnings

The Business Operations Manager will advise the Education Director and implement measures in accordance with the Guidelines.

Incidents

In the event an incident develops after the commencement of School, it will be managed in accordance with the Critical Incident Management Plan.

Maintenance

The Business Operations Manager will ensure the Campus is maintained;

- a. To provide a buffer between the School's boundaries and assets,
- b. Ensuring fire protection and suppression equipment is serviceable, and
- c. All flammable materials are safely stored.
- d. Arrange a yearly inspection of the Thora campus by the RFS and address issues that arise.

Delegation

The Business Operations Manager should delegate his responsibilities under this document to another member of staff in the event of absence over an extended bushfire danger period 1 August to 31 March. Note that this period may be extended from time to time.

Further Information

Staff should be aware of the measures detailed in the Critical Incident Management Plan.

If unsure of any element within this document, or the Critical Incident Management Plan, staff should consult with the Business Operations Manager.