

Fire and Bushfire Preparedness Policy

BRUNSWICK EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rationale

Brunswick East Primary School (BEPS) is committed to ensuring the highest standards of care, safety, and welfare for its students. BEPS is also committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for its employees, contract workers and visitors to our School.

We recognise that in all our operations and activities we have a duty of care to identify, assess, control and manage risks so that the possibility of harm is minimised or eliminated.

Purpose

This policy describes the procedures and management tasks that BEPS has in place to:

- minimise / eliminate the risk of a fire occurring in a school building or on school grounds
- minimise risk to the school community in the event of a bushfire
- ensures that the School is prepared to respond in the event of a fire occurring

This policy addresses the following areas with regard to preparing the school to respond to a fire threat or event:

- Emergency Management Plan (EMP)
- Emergency Evacuation Drills
- Site Preparedness
- Immediate Bushfire Threat

Emergency Management Plan

BEPS maintains an Emergency Management Plan (EMP).

The EMP identifies key staff and their areas of responsibility and details the procedures that are to be enacted in the event of any emergency, including bushfire. It applies to all staff, students, visitors, contractors and volunteers at the school.

The EMP details the School's nominated refuges that may be required in the event of a bushfire/fire emergency. These include:

- an on-site refuge, which has access to emergency equipment, first aid supplies, communication systems, water and toilets
- an off-site refuge at a neighbourhood park

The EMP describes the emergency response equipment that will be kept at BEPS including:

- first aid materials
- medical equipment
- a battery-powered radio set

The EMP details the communication systems in use at BEPS and how these are to be maintained by Office staff.

Under the direction of the Principal, the Emergency Management Committee reviews the EMP regularly. The EMP describes how the Committee will be established, the Committee's purpose, membership, office bearer roles and duties. A copy of the EMP is located in the Staff Room.

Responsibilities

The **Principal** must ensure that the EMP:

- is kept up-to-date
- is reviewed at least annually
- is reviewed immediately after any significant incident
- includes procedures to enact in the event of building fires and bushfire

- includes procedures for approving offsite activities to ensure that the risk of bushfire in the activity vicinity is considered during planning (refer to Camp policy)

The **Principal** must ensure that:

- there is appropriate access to facilities and grounds for emergency vehicles
- an Emergency Management Committee (EMC) is established annually to conduct review of the EMP

Education Support Staff must ensure that:

- first aid materials and medical equipment are checked each Monday morning
- communication systems are maintained, including a battery-powered radio set

All staff must ensure that:

- they are familiar with the Emergency Management Plan and their responsibilities within it, including the procedures for fire and bushfire response

All teaching staff must ensure that:

- they are familiar with their roles and responsibilities in the EMP
- when preparing for an excursion:
 - the excursion meets DET guidelines and procedures
 - the excursion plans are pre-approved using the *Approval Proforma for all Excursions and Activities Requiring School Council Approval*
 - they are familiar with emergency procedures for the excursion, and in particular emergency procedures pertaining to campsites
 - the excursion has arrangements that will be put into place if the excursion needs to be cancelled or recalled because of bushfire threat
 - they explain emergency procedures to students as soon as practical after arrival at the excursion venue/campsite

Parents/carers must ensure that they:

- provide the School with emergency contacts and keep these up to date/current at all times
- inform the School of any student absence with as much notice as possible - where possible prior to the commencement of the school day and not later than the morning of the student's absence
- notify the School by telephone or email if they decide to keep their child at home on an extreme fire danger day

Emergency evacuation drills

BEPS will conduct emergency evacuation drills at least once per term to:

- familiarise staff and students with emergency procedures
- provide staff and students with an opportunity to practise responding appropriately during an emergency
- identify weaknesses in the management of the evacuation procedures
- equip staff to be sufficiently flexible to manage a range of different emergencies

Emergency evacuation drills will:

- be conducted at different times of the school day and with different emergency scenarios
- practise evacuation to both the on-site refuge and off-site refuge areas, as identified in the EMP

Responsibilities

The **Principal** must ensure that:

- emergency procedures and evacuation drills are practiced during each school term during normal school hours
- at least one fire-related drill is conducted per term during the October - April bushfire season

- all staff and students practice evacuating to the on-site and off-site refuges
- information on the bushfire preparedness policy and procedures are provided to staff

The **Assistant Principal** must ensure that:

- casual relief staff are aware of the EMP and their roles and responsibilities within it
- parents and guardians are provided with information on bushfire preparedness
- reminders of the School's emergency procedures are issued during the October - April bushfire season
- notices of bushfire evacuation procedures and bushfire emergency contact numbers are located around the School in appropriate locations and are kept up to date
- staff are prepared for their specific roles and responsibilities relating to emergency bushfire procedures, including preparing for bushfire events, monitoring and executing emergency bushfire procedures and the effective operation of relevant emergency equipment

All **Staff** must ensure that:

- they participate fully in all emergency evacuation drills
- they are up-to-date with their training to undertake specific roles and responsibilities relating to emergency bushfire procedures, including preparing for bushfire events, monitoring and executing emergency bushfire procedures and the effective operation of relevant emergency equipment

Site Preparedness

BEPS will maintain school buildings and grounds in order to reduce the risk of fire by:

- developing and implementing a *Schedule of works* to monitor and plan for removal of materials that could be bushfire hazards, including:
 - branches overhanging buildings
 - debris and rubbish around and under buildings, including gutters
 - dry grass and vegetation
- undertaking regular inspections to identify potential fire hazards
- managing or removing materials that may easily be ignited around buildings, facilities and in the school grounds

Responsibilities

The **Principal** will ensure that the *Schedule of works*:

- is prepared and completed during October and January of each school year
- is approved by School Council in January and October (or within one month of being prepared)

Learning Community Leaders/staff must ensure that:

- all flammable materials within their area of responsibility are identified on the chemical register
- all flammable materials are stored appropriately in flammable resistant cabinets
- all building exits are continuously kept clear of obstructions
- the integrity of classroom and office exit points are maintained at all times

Bushfire/fire threat

In the event of a bushfire threatening BEPS during a day of normal school attendance:

- the bushfire procedures in the Emergency Management Plan will be enacted
- the school will follow directions from DET and the Emergency Services authorities

Responsibilities

The **Principal** is responsible for:

- enacting the procedures for fires and bushfires in the Emergency Management Plan
- ensuring that the bushfire procedures in the Emergency Management Plan are enacted and followed by all staff
- deciding whether any excursion/activity, which is planned to occur on a day of extreme fire danger or total fire ban, can proceed or must be cancelled; if the excursion/activity is permitted to proceed, the Principal must ensure that fire safety precautions are in place and are being implemented by the Teacher-in-charge of the excursion/activity
- ensuring that any excursion/activity that is already in progress when a day of extreme fire danger or total fire ban is declared is recalled, if necessary

All staff are responsible for:

- enacting the procedures for fires and bushfires in the Emergency Management Plan
- conducting an emergency evacuation if required

Implementation

This policy will be implemented in accordance with the school's Emergency Management Plan.

References

Emergency Management Planning - Department of Education & Training:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/mgtplanning.aspx

Vic Emergency: <http://emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/>

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