



POLICIES

Leschenault Catholic Primary

Topic: Bushfire Plan

Policy No:

Policy Area: Community

Updated: 2016

Date of Review: 2018

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Introduction

This plan is for the Leschenault Catholic Primary School and has been designed to assist staff in the event of a total fire ban, catastrophic fire danger rating, or a bushfire. Letters to staff and parents are included in the appendix as well as notices regarding the plans of closures of the school.

Overview

GENERAL INFORMATION This Bushfire Plan (BP) has been developed during Term One after consultation with:

- families of students attending the School
- members of the emergency services (e.g. DFES, Local Emergency Management Committee and/or Community Emergency Services Manager)

The BP is to be reviewed annually during Term One each year to reflect any changes that may have taken place in:

- Catholic Education or government policy
- site facilities
- Personnel normally on site.

The BP outlines required actions to prepare the school before the bushfire season as per the *Principal's Guide To Bushfire*. (refer Appendix 1)

The BP also outlines activities to be undertaken by staff and students at the different levels of a bushfire emergency:

- Catastrophic 'Code Red'
- 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').

Where applicable, a building is nominated as the **Safer Location** building for this school.

- It has been prepared for a bushfire emergency and will safely accommodate all persons normally at the school.

The Principal will forward a copy of the site BP to the CEOWA.

Bushfire Preparation checklist (refer to Appendix 1)

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

The school is to review (and update where appropriate) the plan and submit the up to date version of this plan to the CEOWA when required.

In this regard, any bushfire advice received by the school from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC),

Communication

There are several levels of communication requirements at school level before, during and after bushfire events.

Preparing for Bushfire Season

- The Principal must ensure all students and staff are aware of the School's bushfire response plan. It is also necessary to ensure that relief staff and parents have been made aware of the school's bushfire plan.
- The Principal should establish contact with emergency services, including DFES, the local volunteer fire brigade, WA Police, the LEMC and CESM.
- Schools located in bushfire prone areas need to incorporate key bushfire messages in their curriculum.
- Communication plans (including emergency contacts and a telephone tree) need to be in place for evacuation or planned closure. *See Appendix 4 for a Communication Plan, Appendix 5 for Emergency Contacts and Appendix 6 for a Communication Tree*
- The School has an effectively working emergency warning or alert system and emergency communication equipment is available and working.
- Schools have in place systems to account for students, staff and visitors in an emergency, such as class rolls (or equivalent) and visitor registers. Consideration should be in place for situations such as a loss of power affecting the ability to print from electronic sources.
- Arrangements are in place in relation to school buses if appropriate (notification of contractors if pre-emptive closure is invoked; the availability of buses if off-site evacuation is required).

Pre-emptive Closure

- The CEO Incident Controller will make the decision to close a school based upon advice from Emergency Services and this will be relayed to the Principal via the Principal School Advisor.
- The Principal is to notify staff and parents using sms via SEQTA.
- If appropriate, bus contractors will be contacted to arrange for the evacuation of students to a designated area.
- Notice of Planned Temporary School Closure should be posted as per the *Principal's Guide to Bushfire*, both physically at the school and electronically on the website.

During Evacuation

- The school will contact their Principal Schools Advisor.
- The school will contact parents via sms and school app.
- The school will notify bus contractors.
- The school has landlines and one school mobile phone 0431 317 531. It would be preferable that parents restrict calling the school at this time to emergency calls only.
- The official broadcaster of Emergency Events is ABC radio. Our local station is ABC local radio. They will provide up to date information during a bushfire event in our area.
- The DFES website provides up to date information on fire events. Refer to <http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/> .

NOTE: DFES are introducing the national Emergency Alert system to send community warning messages via mobile telephones in affected areas. (Information can be obtained from <http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/pages/default.aspx>).

The Principal communicates directly with the CEOWA personnel including any media communications. Staff should not comment directly to media.

Reopening the School

- The Principal Schools Advisor is to advise the Principal when the school can re-open.
- Parents need to know when the school is reopened via sms and school app.
- The Notice of Planned Temporary School Closure should be physically removed from the school premises and website.
- All parties that were advised of closure (e.g. Bus Contractors) should be advised of reopening.

TYPES OF FIRE EVENT

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

1. Total Fire Ban

In the event of a Total Fire Ban the **Bushfire Plan** will be invoked: (refer to *Principal's Guide to Bushfire* for all procedures).

This means:

- you must not light or use any fires in the open air;
- all open fires for the purpose of cooking or camping are not allowed;
- 'hot work' such as metal work, grinding, welding, soldering, gas cutting or similar is not allowed unless you have an exemption; and
- You must not undertake any other activities that may start a fire.

The DFES advice is that chainsaws, plant or grass trimmers or lawn mowers can be used during a total fire ban in suburban or built up areas which are cleared of flammable material, but not in bushland or other areas where their use is likely to cause fire.

It is also necessary to ensure:

- The equipment or machinery is mechanically sound.
- All reasonable precautions are taken to prevent a bushfire starting.

It is recommended postponing the activity altogether to minimise the risk of fire.

For information on activities that can or cannot be carried out during a Total Fire Ban visit www.dfes.wa.gov.au/totalfirebans/Pages/TotalFireBanWhatCantIDo.aspx.

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

This information is also available by visiting www.dfes.wa.gov.au

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.

Category	Fire Danger Index (FDR)	Action
Catastrophic	100+	Schools on Bushfire Zone Register closed on instruction from Deputy Director General Schools, through Regional Executive Director. School to invoke communication plan and cancel bus services.
Extreme	75-99	Monitor DFES website
Severe	50-74	Monitor DFES website
Very High	32-49	Normal school operations
High	12-31	Normal school operations
Low-Moderate	0-11	Normal school operations

In the event of a catastrophic weather warning the **Bushfire Plan** will be invoked as per the flow chart at Appendix 2 (refer to *Principal's Guide to Bushfire* for all procedures and sample letters).

2.1 Planned Pre-emptive Closure

The CEOWA will contact Principals of affected schools directly when a planned (pre-emptive) closure is to be invoked in a particular part of the State. 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. Schools should have telephone trees in place to provide this information at short notice or after hours.

Once advised that your school is to undertake pre-emptive closure, you need to notify your school community that a closure is imminent. The Principal needs to send letters to parents and provide each staff member with a memo that clearly states 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 remove the need to close and the school can therefore stand down its pre-emptive closure plans. The Executive Director confirms with the Principal 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 goes ahead regardless, in order to provide a level of certainty to parents.

The DEFS is the final authority on advice about which schools are in danger and the level of risk at the time. The Executive Director makes the final decision as to whether or not a planned closure of public schools is to proceed, based on DFES's advice.

2.2 During a Planned Closure

The Principal must stay informed of current fire danger rating and any fire activity by monitoring local media (local radio, especially the ABC, and television) and by regularly checking for updates with DFES.

2.3 Re-opening School

Parents will be notified when the Catastrophic FDR has been downgraded and that it is therefore safe for their children to return to school after a planned closure. The school will sms or place information on the school website and providing a number for parents to call for information about the re-opening of the school.

3. Bushfire

In the event of a bushfire threatening the school, the school will notify DFES and the **Bushfire Plan** will be invoked by way of the school siren (or hand held siren). An emergency evacuation will be signalled by short, repeated sounding of the siren. Should the power be off, a hand bell will be rung continuously.

3.1. Bushfire- Watch community

During a bushfire, Emergency Services provide as much information as possible through a number of different channels. There are three levels of warning, **ADVICE, WATCH AND ACT** and **EMERGENCY WARNING**. These change to reflect the increasing risk to life and the decreasing amount of time you have until the fire arrives.

3.1.1 Advice

If the school is likely to be threatened by the fire, activate the Emergency Management Plan immediately. Notify DFES Communication Centre of your decision and relocation point.

An ADVICE provides you with information on a bushfire that is not threatening lives or property but may be causing smoke near the school. Turn off evaporative air conditioners. Regular checks of the school are to be undertaken paying special attention to the evaporative air conditioners.

3.1.2 Watch and Act

A WATCH AND ACT message tells you the fire conditions are changing and there is a possible threat to lives and the school. The Principal's decision to leave or relocate students, staff and visitors off site should be based upon assessment of known information and current circumstances, including advice from emergency services or observations at the time of the event.

3.1.3 Emergency Warning

An EMERGENCY WARNING is the highest level of warning and tells you of immediate danger. In some circumstances it may start with a siren sound called the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) to get your attention as the fire is about to arrive. SEWS is a distinctive sound that is broadcast immediately prior to major emergency announcements on radio, television and other communication systems. SEWS tells people 'you need to listen- there is an emergency in your area and you need to take action now'. It is used like a siren and is strictly controlled for use by an authorised hazard management agency only.

The School should activate their Bushfire Plan in regards to evacuation. Consideration will include; location of fire and ability to travel safely to the selected relocation point, notify DFES Communication Centre of your decision and relocation point. The Principal is to liaise with the Regional Executive Director. **If it is not safe to evacuate, direct all students, staff and visitors to the school's *Safer Location*.**

3.2. Bushfire- Act

3.2.1 Response when a bushfire starts and the school is open

3.2.1.1 Evacuation Procedure

School to evacuate off-site on advice from DFES

Has the evacuation to the off-site safer location been approved and how long will it take to get there.

- All classes remain with their teachers and allocated education assistants.
- All other staff and visitors report to the Front Office.
- Teachers account for each child and identify students and support staff with known respiratory conditions.
- Doors and windows must be closed and **evaporative air coolers turned off**. Students and staff are to remain in classrooms unless directed otherwise by their fire warden.
- Fire wardens are designated to manage evacuation routes, liaise with staff.
- The Principal and fire wardens, will control this response until the arrival of DFES or emergency services who will then take over.
- Students and adults with known respiratory conditions will be identified and given special consideration.

Parent Access

Parents will be informed when and where to pick up students upon advice from the school or through DFES or Incident Controller.

3.2.1.2 Safer Location Procedure – if evacuation is not possible

School to remain on site on advice from DFES.

- All classes remain with their teachers and allocated education assistants.
- All other staff and visitors report to the Front Office.
- Teachers account for each child and identify students and support staff with known respiratory conditions.
- Doors and windows must be closed and **air coolers turned off**. Students and staff are to remain in classrooms unless directed otherwise by their fire warden.
- Fire wardens are designated to manage evacuation routes and liaise with staff.
- The Principal and fire wardens, will control this response until the arrival of the DFES or emergency services who will then take over.
- Students and adults with known respiratory conditions will be identified and given special consideration.

Parent Access

Parents advised **NOT** to pick up students and to monitor local media for specific access information.

3.2.2 Response when a bushfire starts and the school is closed

If the CEO Incident Controller makes a decision on school closure based upon advice from Emergency Services the Regional Executive Director will inform the Principal of closure.

The Principal is to notify staff and parents using sms (see Appendix 4 for a Communication Plan) of Closure.

The CEOWA Incident Controller will, in consultation with the Executive Director identify alternative accommodation of students and staff if required. The Department's Media Unit will utilise media outlets to make public announcements of school closures, temporary alternative accommodation and contact number(s) for further information.

The CEOWA's Incident Controller in consultation with DFES will inform the Executive Director when the school can reopen, who will inform the Principal accordingly.

3.2.3 Recovery

The priorities for the school during recovery are

1. Health and Safety of individuals;
2. Social Recovery;
3. Physical (Structural) Recovery.

General

- When possible, return to normal routine.
- Attend to staff and student welfare, considering counselling support.
- Provide information for families and the community of any impact (including if there is none) on the school and school routine following the bushfire.
- Undertake a check of any equipment or stock used and arrange replacement/replenishment.
- Address any physical damage to the school, isolating areas if required and if necessary relocate to alternative accommodation. Contact the Resources Team at the CEOWA to commence repairs. The CEOWA should be advised of any damage caused by the bushfire.
- Manage Administrative details including insurance.


Debrief

- What worked, what didn't?
- Was anything overlooked?
- What could you do better next time?
- Should roles change?
- If changes are made, incorporate them into the formal plan and advise the appropriate parties including staff and other authorities.
- Share the knowledge with other schools.
- Test the revised bushfire management plan and procedures.

For further details and contacts refer to the Recovery Section of the *Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan* and *The Principal's Guide to Bushfire*

APPENDICIES

1. **COMPLIANCE: Bushfire Preparation Checklist**

	Department of Education	Bushfire Preparation Check List for the Summer Months
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Principals should be thoroughly familiar with their current plans for dealing with bushfires.

All staff members should be aware of their responsibilities in accordance with the plans.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

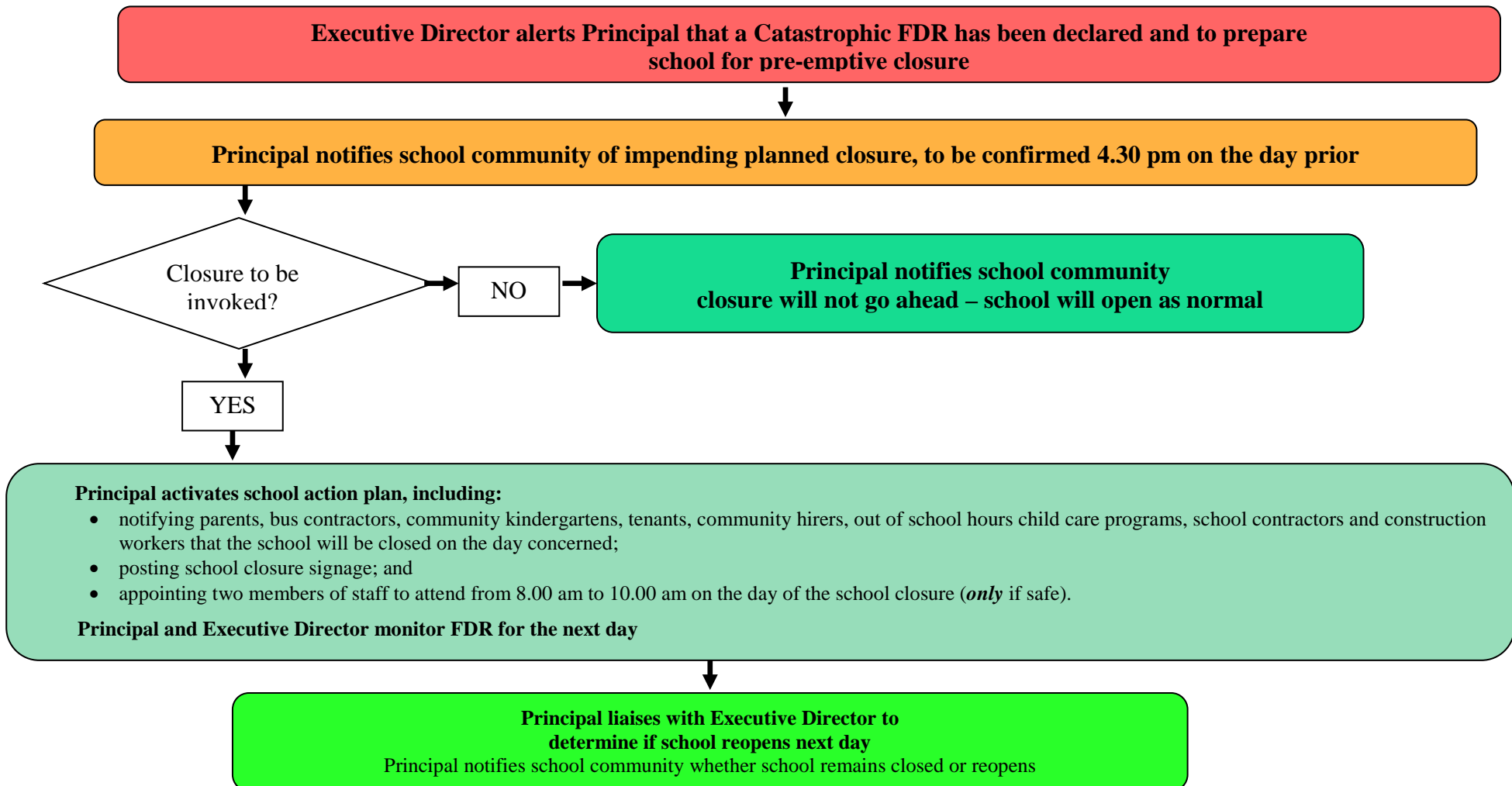
Tick when task has been completed, or write NA if not applicable

The School <i>Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan</i> includes a plan for dealing with bushfires. Schools on the Bushfire Zone Register must also have a separate stand-alone bushfire plan.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students, staff, relief staff and parents/carers have been made aware of the school bushfire plan. • The bushfire plan must be reviewed prior to each bushfire season (Term 1). 	
If school is on the Bushfire Zone Register, the principal (or a nominated staff member) has established contact with emergency services, including DFES, the local volunteer fire brigade, WA Police, your Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) or Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) and incorporated their feedback into the plans (as required) .	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Emergency Alert warning system (www.emergencyalert.gov.au/) Emergency Services must be informed of your nominated Safer Location as part of your <i>Emergency Critical Incident Management Plan procedures</i>. 	
Schools on the Bushfire Zone Register need to incorporate key bushfire messages in their curriculum.	
Air conditioners – awareness of location of the switches and how to switch off the units.	
Communication plans (include telephone tree – see Appendix D1) are in place for evacuation or planned closure.	
Practice evacuation drills prior to October and at least once per term during the bushfire season, October to March. Note this is a minimum three drills per year.	
School has a correctly functioning emergency warning or alert system.	
Emergency communications equipment is available e.g. mobile telephones, hand-operated fire alarm (portable siren), portable radios and spare batteries.	
Class rolls and visitor register (or equivalent) are readily accessible in an emergency to account for students, staff and visitors.	
First aid equipment is available and staff members trained in first aid have been identified.	
Evacuation kit should be checked at least once per term.	
Arrangements are in place in relation to school buses (notification of contractors if pre-emptive closure is invoked; availability of buses if off-site evacuation is required)	
Procedures are in place to restrict use of machinery (e.g. angle grinders, mowers, and machinery with internal combustion engines) in close proximity to bushfire fuels where they may start a fire on severe fire danger days.	
A Safer Location within the school building should be identified and prepared in the event that an off-site evacuation is not possible (Refer page 4).	
BPZ (20 metre radius), cleared of all rubbish, long dry grass, bark and flammable materials.	

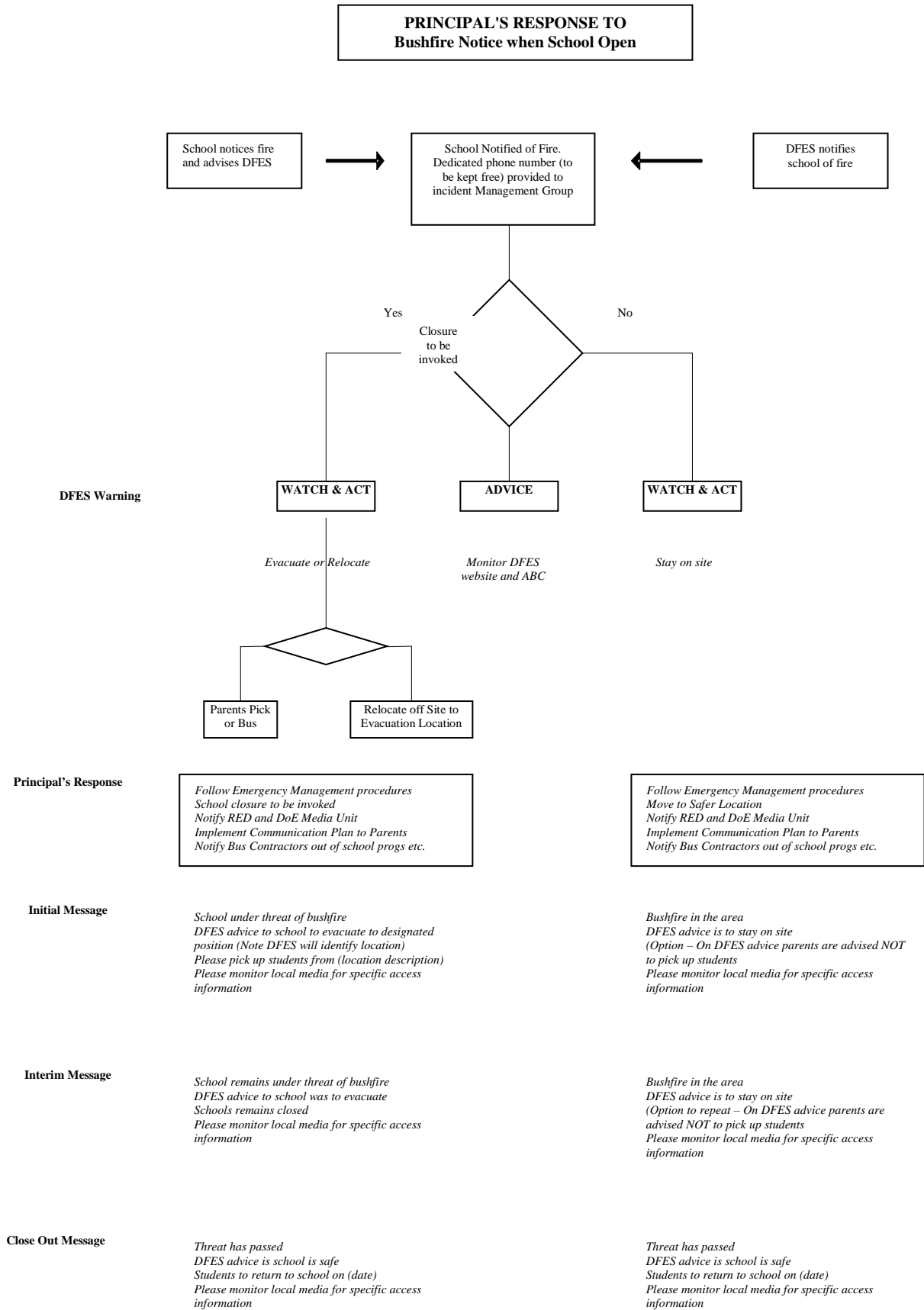
2. Catastrophic Event Flow Chart

In the event of a catastrophic weather warning the **Bushfire Plan** will be invoked as per the following flow chart: (refer to *Principal's Guide to Bushfire* for all procedures and sample letters)

PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSE TO Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating



4. Communication Plan



5. Emergency Response Contact List

➡
Assess
Undertake

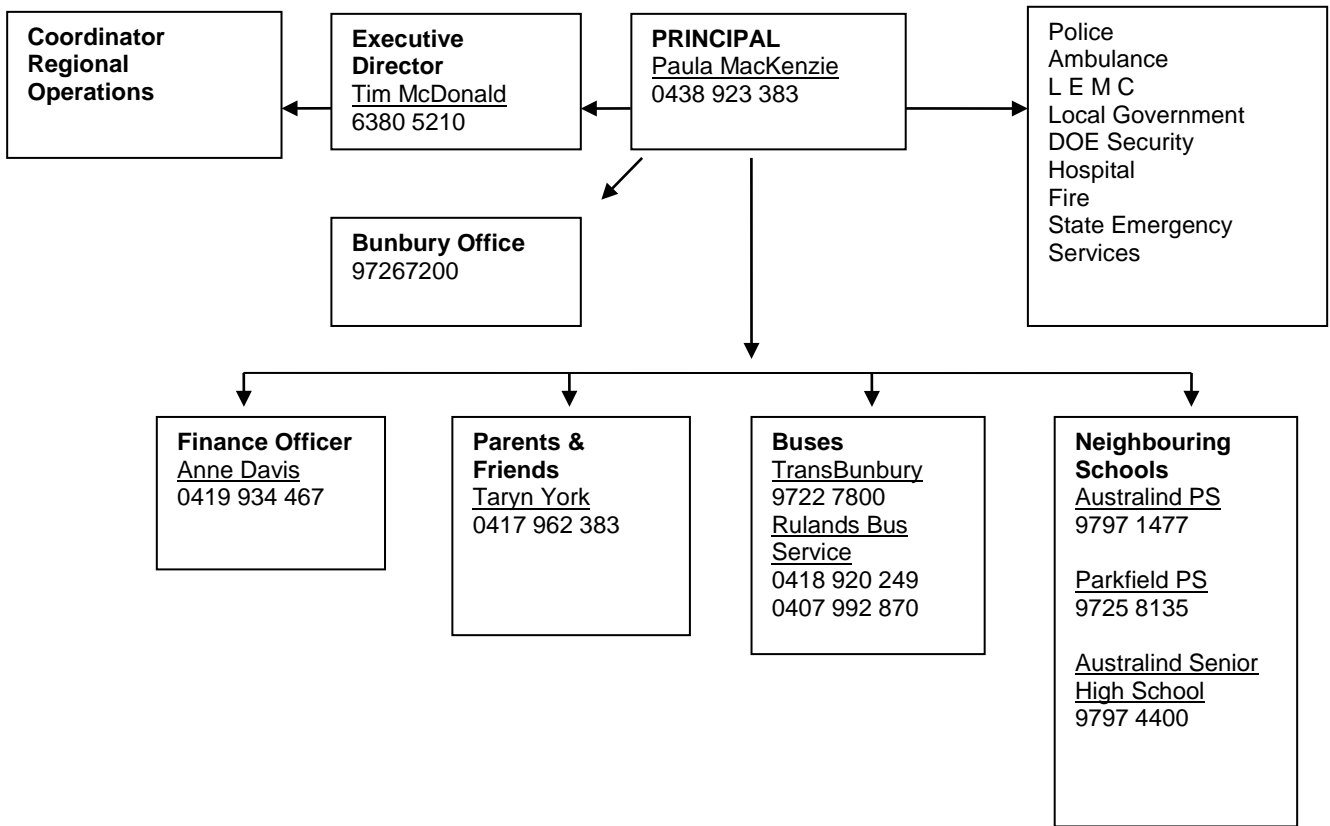
➡ ➡
Evacuate Inform

➡
Organise

EMERGENCY CONTACT & PHONE NUMBERS		ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	
Police	Local: 97970222 (Australind P.S.)	Evacuation: Principal Invacuation: Principal	Short repeated sounding of siren or continuous handbell Continuous siren or short whistle blasts
Ambulance / Hospital	Local: 97221000	Checking Rooms	As per Evacuation Policy
Local Ambulance	97 914999		
Fire	000 Emergency Services Coordinator 97801900	Marshalling Evacuation: oval Invacuation: classrooms	Assistant principal Teachers
Bus Contractors	TransBunbury 9722 7800 Rulands Bus Service 0418 920 249 0407 992 870		
Power Outage (Synergy)	13 13 54	Accredited FIRST AID Officers	Staff member Name(s) Paula MacKenzie Carla Kay Christine Gordon
State Emergency Service	132 500	Communication	Principal /Finance Officer
Poisons Information	131 126	Next of Kin Notification	Principal (Police if death)
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Name	Mr Tim McDonald W: 6380 5210 fax: 6380 5110	Reporting and Review	Assistant Principal
PRINCIPAL	Name Paula MacKenzie	97971999 mobile: 0438 923 383	
FINANCE OFFICER	Name Anne Davis	97971999 mobile: 0419 934 467	

In the case of an EMERGENCY
Call
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6. Leschenault Catholic Primary School Communication Tree



Response Team

Principal
Finance Officer
APA
APRE