



# Waterfall Public School

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15 McKell Avenue, Waterfall 2233  
Phone: 9520 9638 Fax: 9548 1238  
Email: waterfall-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au  
Principal: Penelope Passmore

26/08/2019

Dear Parent/Caregiver

I am writing to you at this time to inform you of the Bushfire Emergency Plan.

**The school is identified as a High Risk site.**

Due to a very dry winter and warmer than average temperatures, the fire risk is of heightened significance much earlier this season.

I ask you to read the attached information and store it in a handy location should the school be evacuated and/or closed to ensure you have full understanding of the procedures we have put in place.

**Please return the acknowledgement slip below so the school can ensure we have communicated with all parents.**

Thank you for your support.

Ms Penni Passmore  
Principal

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## Acknowledgement Form

I acknowledge receipt of, and have read and understood, Waterfall Public School's Bushfire Emergency Management Plan.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Parent/Caregiver Signature*

2019 - 2020

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Email: [waterfall-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:waterfall-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au)  
Principal: Penelope Passmore

ABN: 55 133 513 592

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

## Re: **ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 2019-2020 BUSH FIRE SEASON**

I am writing to let you know about arrangements for our school for the current bush fire season.

Our school has been identified as a school at increased risk if a fire was to break out on a day when a catastrophic fire danger rating is issued for our area.

To ensure the health, safety and welfare of students and staff, the NSW Department of Education and Communities has determined that on days when a catastrophic fire danger rating is issued for our area, the school will temporarily cease operations for the day(s) the rating is current and alternative learning arrangements will be put in place. This is based on information obtained by a bush fire assessment of our school arranged by the Department.

Catastrophic fire danger ratings are likely to occur on a very small number of days during the bush fire season, if at all. Once a decision to close the school has been made the following actions will be taken:

1. A sign will be attached to the front gate of the school indicating that the school will not be operational.
2. If there is sufficient time, text messages will be sent to families who have provided current mobile phone numbers notifying the school will be non-operational until further notice.
3. Your cooperation in keeping students home is appreciated.

The school will only receive confirmation of catastrophic fire danger ratings after school hours the day before the forecast is issued. To assist us in contacting all parents please ensure that you have provided the school with up-to-date home or after hours contact details.

A copy of an "Information for Parents" provided by the Department about these arrangements is attached.

Please contact the school on 9520 9638 if you would like any further information about this matter.

Yours sincerely

Penelope Passmore  
Principal

## ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE BUSH FIRE SEASON

### **This information is only for schools that are on the bush fire register**

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#### **Information for parents and carers**

This brochure provides information for parents and carers about arrangements for the bush fire season. This information is only relevant for schools that are on the bush fire register.

#### **Introduction**

The NSW Department of Education and Communities has conducted bush fire assessments for NSW government schools in bush fire prone areas. These results have been validated by an independent external expert and have been reviewed in consultation with the NSW Rural Fire Service.

A small number of schools have been identified as a school at increased risk if a fire were to break out on a day when a catastrophic fire danger rating is issued for the area that the school is located in. **This includes the school your child attends.**

To ensure the health, safety and welfare of students and staff, the NSW Department of Education and Communities has determined that on days when a catastrophic fire danger rating is issued for the area the school is in, the school will temporarily cease operations for the day(s) the rating is current and alternative learning arrangements will be put in place.

#### **What is a Fire Danger Rating?**

A fire danger rating is the expected fire danger on a particular day and is determined by considering a combination of factors including air temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and drought. The ratings range from Low – Moderate through High, Very High, Severe, Extreme and Catastrophic.

#### **What is a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating?**

A catastrophic rating means that if fires broke out they would be uncontrollable, unpredictable and very fast moving with very aggressive flames extending high above tree tops and buildings.

#### **When will I know if my child's school won't be operating the next day?**

Your school will notify you as soon as possible. You will be notified by telephone or other communication, depending on when the school is advised that the catastrophic fire danger rating has been issued. The school will not receive this information until after school has finished on the day before the rating takes effect. The school will contact all parents and carers and, where appropriate, issue advice through local media.

Please provide your current home or after hours contact to your school. Parents and carers should also watch or listen for local media as information may be provided through these outlets.

**What educational arrangements will be in place if the school isn't operating?**

Talk to your school about the arrangements that will be in place in the event of the school temporarily ceasing operations due to a catastrophic fire danger rating being issued. Schools will be undertaking advanced planning to ensure that if schools do need to cease operations on some days, they will have alternative educational arrangements in place such as re-locating to another school, where practicable, or providing take home work for students.

**Will my child's school be affected by severe or extreme fire danger ratings?**

During the bush fire season, including days of severe or extreme fire danger rating, schools will continue to operate as normal unless advised otherwise by emergency services. During the bush fire season schools will be vigilant and monitor local conditions, particularly on days when severe or extreme fire danger ratings are issued.

**Further information**

We appreciate your cooperation during the bush fire season. For further information about fire danger ratings and the bush fire season, please refer to the NSW rural Fire Service website at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au).

The Department is developing a website on bush fire safety including providing up to date information. The address is: <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/bushfire-safety>.



## 2.8 Response Procedure for Specific Hazards

### **Bushfire**

#### **Forecast of Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating**

The Department of Education and communities has rated Waterfall Public School in a high risk category for bushfire. This means that on catastrophic weather warning days this school will temporarily cease operations for the day(s) that the catastrophic fire danger rating is in place. The school may also be required to close at the direction of local emergency services and in consultation with the School Education Director in the case of a local bushfire hazard.

Catastrophic weather forecast predictions are normally made in advance. When there is a warning that catastrophic weather is likely the Principal will remind the whole school community of the procedures below in case the forecast remains in place. A bright red information note will be sent home with all students. This is an indication that parents should be listening to local media, accessing the Rural Fire Service website [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) and be prepared.

The Principal will be advised of a catastrophic weather forecast via email and a back-up telephone call from the Department's Work Health and Safety Directorate or School Education Director at approximately 4.30pm the day before the predicted conditions. The Regional Director will also be notified of the weather forecast.

When this weather forecast is received the Principal or nominee will notify parents, staff and cleaning staff via text message. The message will go to the nominated mobile phone number. Parents should also listen for warnings on the news and may monitor the rural fire service website for additional information. [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au). It is important to note that we only follow weather forecasts for the Greater Sydney Metropolitan area (Area 4).

Once a text message is sent to declare the school closed due to catastrophic weather conditions the school will remain closed until further advice is sent via text message.

In the event that the mobile phone messaging service fails to operate, parents will need to rely on the Rural Fire Service and the media to obtain information.

#### **Staff**

Once the school is declared closed, staff members are unable to attend the school site. If sufficient warning a sign will be attached to the school fence indicating that the school site is non-operational. No cleaning staff or students are to attend the school site.

Staff should report for duty to the school nearest their home address. Relevant DEC and Emergency Services will be contacted confirming the temporary closure.

**Cleaning staff**

Cleaning staff need to contact their employer and have an agreed plan in place.

## **Evacuation Assembly Areas and Evacuation Routes**

**Designated Assembly Points**

Assemble at front gate, mark rolls and move to our evacuation point at the Waterfall Tennis Courts. We will be leaving early – before the fire is anywhere near the school. Evacuation routes to the gate are clearly marked on the school map in this policy which is known by all staff and located in each room of the school. The safest walking route to the tennis court is up McKell Ave, assembling in Tharawal Lane adjacent to the tennis courts.

The evacuation routes will be rehearsed every semester. These drills will usually be scheduled for Term 1 and Term 3. This is the most appropriate time.

The lead emergency agency (eg RFS or FIRE RESCUE NSW), or any other delegated agency, may advise of an alternative location for evacuation according to the circumstances.

**Transport Details**

We will be walking to the evacuation site at Waterfall tennis courts via the predetermined route.

Buses will be used to evacuate from this evacuation site. Maianbar Bundeena Bus service will be called as soon as possible. If this company is unable to attend, Veolia bus service is the alternative.

Bundeena Maianbar Bus Service	9523 8819    0417 418 860
Veolia Bus Service	(02) 8700 0555

**Emergency Contacts**

NSW Rural Fire Service – 000  
Fire and Rescue NSW – 000  
NSW Police Force – 000  
State Emergency Service – 000  
Sutherland Shire Council – 9710 0333  
NSW Ambulance Service - 000

Sutherland Hospital, Caringbah – 9540 7111

Fire Control Centre- 9520 4040

\* **School Education Director- 9531 3900**

WHS Consultant – Coralie Hoole 02 7814 2493

\* Incident Report & Support Hotline 1800 811 523

\* **To be contacted in the event of an evacuation**

Note: All fires are to be reported to 000

## **Part Two: Evacuation Procedures**

The following procedures can be adopted to specifically prevent and respond to bushfire attack. They apply to all buildings and premises within the school.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

In the event of a bushfire:

- Office staff / Principal contact Fire Control Centre (9520 4040).  
Do not assume that the fire has been reported
- Remove flammable items from windows and doorways
- Stay clear of windows
- Listen to the local radio station (99.7 2SSR FM) for information and advice.
- Principal makes decision to implement Lockdown or Evacuation Procedures

- **Please Note as of 01/06/2018**

On Tuesday a local playgroup is held in the school library. Facilitators sign on at the school visitor book in the office and take a weekly roll of group attendees. Facilitators are trained in school emergency procedures and direct visiting groups to follow school procedures.

- **BASC in the Library**

- Most Mornings and most afternoons a BASC operates in the School Library. Facilitators sign-on in the visitor book and conduct their own sign-on procedures for students attending. Facilitators are trained in school emergency procedures and take daily roles of attendees and direct attendees to follow school procedures.

If the organised and safe movement of students to the evacuation assembly point is judged to be **impossible**, the following procedures should be followed:

## **Implement Lockdown Procedures**

- Principal directs students and staff to move to K-6 classroom. Call rolls.
- All windows and doors should be closed, blinds drawn and the base of doors should be covered to prevent smoke entry
- Air conditioning should be turned off
- Students should be assembled away from the part of the building which will be initially exposed to the fire, in accordance with established evacuation procedures
- When the fire 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 visitors' book should be used in accounting for the safety and evacuation of all visitors. Await direction from emergency services

If the organised and safe movement of students to the evacuation assembly point is judged to be **possible**, the following procedures should be followed:

## **Implement Evacuation Procedures**

- Evacuation signal – (long continuous horn)
- Notify Fire Brigade/ Police/ Bus Company/ District Office as appropriate- principal or delegate, office staff- mobile phone
- Teachers: collect evacuation packets and class roll located near doors of classrooms and secure classrooms
- SASS checks admin building, Demountable 1 (front), toilets, staffroom (collects EpiPen satchels) and library.
- K-6 teacher checks K-6 classroom, office, visitor sign-on book, Parkview room
- Turn off main electricity switch-Principal/SASS
- Students evacuate from buildings and assemble at front gate. Roll is marked
- Students walk to Waterfall Tennis Courts. Roll marked.
- Await advice from Fire Brigade

## **Part Three: Decision to Evacuate:**

### **Evacuation 'Trigger'**

The safety of students and staff must be the guiding principle in determining the decision to evacuate. Any decision to evacuate should be based on the assessment of actual or potential danger, if possible on the advice of emergency services. Decisions concerning evacuation and the selection of designated safe assembly areas and access routes should be made according to the circumstances and the time of the emergency.

The school population may be evacuated:



- a) When directed by Emergency Services personnel
- b) When directed by DET Director of Public Schools NSW
- c) When the school principal judges an evacuation is necessary

Consult with emergency services before making decision.

Contact        Director of Public Schools NSW, and  
                      WHS Directorate or School Safety and Security Unit