GUMERACHA PRIMARY SCHOOL

DECD BUSHFIRE RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

BUSHFIRE ACTION PLAN

GENERAL INFORMATION

This Bushfire Action Plan (BAP) was first developed in Term 4 2009 after consultation with:
- families of students attending the Gumeracha Primary School and
- members of the Gumeracha Country Fire Service (CFS)

The plan was slightly modified in October 2010 following discussions with John Mudge, DECD Bushfire Consultant.

The BAP is to be reviewed annually during Term 3 each year to reflect any changes that may have taken place in:
- DECD or government policy
- site facilities
- personnel normally on site.

The BAP outlines required actions to prepare:
- the site before the bushfire season
- the building which has been nominated as the site Bushfire Ready Building.

The BAP also outlines activities to be undertaken by staff and students at the different levels of a bushfire emergency:
- on days of Total Fire Ban – Severe, Extreme and Catastrophic FDI
- 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’).

The Main building downstairs double classroom is the nominated Bushfire Refuge for this site.
- It will be prepared for a bushfire emergency as recommended by the CFS audit, and will safely accommodate all persons normally on the site.

It is anticipated that some members of the local Gumeracha community will want to shelter in the Primary School Bushfire Refuge during a bushfire.
- The process to safely accommodate those people along with students and staff is included in the BAP.

The Principal will hold discussions with members of the Gumeracha CFS during Term 3 each year about the bushfire preparedness of the site.
The Principal will forward a copy of the site BAP to the Regional Director to be held in the Regional Office.

The Principal will forward a copy of the site BAP to the Gumeracha CFS by Week 2 of Term 4 each year.

The Front Office SSO will forward a copy of the Bushfire Information brochure to all families of students of the site at the beginning of Term 1 each year. The brochure will also appear on the school’s website.
- Bushfire procedures are explained to the families of new students by the Principal during the enrolment process.

The Principal will include bushfire season reminders and information in site newsletters at least three times in each of Term 4 and Term 1. The Gumeracha Primary School Information Booklet, updated in Term 1 each year, includes detailed information about actions and procedures included in the BAP.

All staff members receive pre fire season updates during Term 3 and ongoing information and instruction about the contents and requirements of the BAP during Term 4 and Term 1 staff meetings.

The Principal will ensure that all new staff members, relieving staff and visitors are briefed about the requirements of the BAP during the site induction process.

TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS ACROSS THE FIRE BAN DISTRICT

If the Bureau of Meteorology and the Country Fire Service issue a forecast of catastrophic bushfire weather conditions within the Fire Ban District, the Gumeracha Primary School and OSHC will be closed and school bus routes cancelled.

Pamphlets and newsletters outlining the DECD school closure policy on days of catastrophic bushfire weather conditions have been distributed to parents and caregivers.

Where possible, the Regional Director will distribute information about the potential for closure on the day before the forecast period.

The Emergency Response Team should prepare to advise all parents and caregivers about the closure and cancellation of bus routes by telephone and by follow-up written notification.
The Regional Director will confirm decision by the Chief Executive to close Gumeracha Primary School and OSHC and cancel school bus routes within the Fire Ban District for a period as determined by emergency services.

School staff will contact all parents and school bus operators, by telephone, to inform them of the decision. A template letter will be provided with key messages to parents and caregivers.

- The letter will provide parents and caregivers with an emergency hotline telephone number and a web address to obtain closure and reopening details about Gumeracha Primary School and OSHC.
- Parents will also be reminded to listen to ABC radio for further warnings and advice messages.

PREPARING THE GUMERACHA PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR A BUSHFIRE

An Emergency Response Team has been established and members instructed on their roles and responsibilities. The members are:

- The Principal
- The Front Office SSO
- Teacher

Their roles and responsibilities are detailed throughout the BAP.

A Bushfire Action Plan has been developed.

- It will be reviewed during Term 2 each year by the staff and presented to the Governing Council for endorsement at the final meeting in Term 3.

The Principal will ensure that emergency bushfire drills are carried out by students and staff during the first 2 weeks of Term 4 and Term 1 each year.

The members of the Emergency Response Team will provide all staff and regular visitors with pre fire season updates during Term 3 each year and instruction about any changes to the contents and requirements of the site Bushfire Action Plan during the first two weeks Term 4 and Term 1.

The Emergency Response Team has nominated the following area surrounding Gumeracha as the local district in this BAP. The area bounded by:-

- Cudlee Creek-Lobethal Road
- Lobethal-Mt Torrens Road
- Mt Torrens Road (between Mt Torrens and Birdwood)
- Cromer Road, Lucky Hit Road, Martin Hill Road and Hill Road (to the north of Birdwood and Kersbrook)
- South Para Road (between Kersbrook and Cudlee Creek).

Staff are instructed in the operation of sprinklers and grounds irrigation systems during the first two weeks of Term 4 and Term 1 each year.

Nominated staff members will monitor local ABC radio 891 for CFS Bushfire Information and Warnings Messages on days of high bush fire danger and pass
on relevant messages to the Principal.
- Front Office SSO,
- SSO attached to Resource Centre

An area of vegetation on the north western side of the site could impact on school facilities during a bushfire.
- A Bushfire Hazard Management Plan has been developed in conjunction with the Facilities Committee.
- A copy is attached to the BAP.
- The plan is reviewed annually during Term 3 to allow required remedial action to take place before the start of the bushfire season.

A defendable space has been prepared around buildings. The Groundsperson and Facilities Committee will inspect the site during Term 3 each year.
- Maintenance will be carried out by the Groundsperson or others as required.

Tall trees within 20 metres of buildings have been trimmed of branches up to a height of 2 metres.
- The Groundsperson and Facilities Committee will inspect the site during Term 3 each year.
- Maintenance will be carried out by the Groundsperson or others as required.

Overhanging trees branches have been trimmed to a distance of 2 metres from building rooflines.
- The Groundsperson and Facilities Committee will inspect the site during Term 3 each year.
- A request will be made to the Facility Manager for the site to safely remove any high level regrowth.

All cavities and openings in the facades and roofs of other buildings have been sealed.
- The Facility Manager will be requested to carry out an annual inspection to ensure the integrity of the buildings is maintained

The gutters and roof gullies of buildings under or near over hanging trees are regularly cleaned and free of vegetation.
- The Groundsperson will attend to lower level gutters each month.
- High gutters and roof gullies are included in the Preventative Maintenance Schedule for the site and will be cleaned at least every three months.

Timber and paintwork on all buildings is well maintained.
- Breakdown maintenance is referred to the Site Facility Manager as required. (Hotline)
- The site Facility Manager can advise on condition projects with data from SAMIS reports

A portable pressure pack, gas siren and spare gas canisters have been purchased for use in signalling a move to the Bushfire Refuge during periods of electricity blackout.
- It is stored in the Emergency Supplies kit
A Bushfire Refuge kit of 'Emergency Supplies' has been assembled in containers and is stored in the Bushfire Refuge.

The kit will contain – A copy of the BAP and staff roles and responsibilities, student rolls, staff/visitor registers, student contact information, important telephone numbers, street directory, battery powered radio, spare batteries, torch, lanterns, first aid kit, gas siren and spare canisters, staff/student medications, mobile phone, drinking water, sweets/nibbles, blankets, towels, duct tape, plastic sheeting etc.

The kit is to be checked at the start of each term by SSO to ensure contents are fresh and operational and that the mobile phone is charged

THE BUSHFIRE REFUGE

The main building downstairs double room is the nominated bushfire Bushfire Refuge for this site.

The Bushfire Refuge has been clearly identified and signed.
- Laminated A3 size posters have been placed in the windows and on the western door.
- Students are reminded of the location during bushfire drills.
- Articles in the Parent Information Book and site newsletters reinforce the location of the Bushfire Refuge.

The Bushfire Refuge is a building of solid construction. All open spaces in the façade and roof have been sealed to prevent entry by embers and ash during a bushfire.

This site has been assessed as being in an area of ‘High’ fire danger. Windows in the building will be fitted with toughened glass and protected by metal mesh. The main building (Bushfire Refuge) can be easily and quickly reached from all areas of the site and safely hold the 90 persons normally present.

Students and staff practise using the Bushfire Refuge and moving to it from a number of areas around the site during emergency bushfire drills carried out during the first 2 weeks of Term 4 and Term 1 each year. These drills are repeated later in Term 4 and Term 1.
- The Principal determines the timing of the drills after consultation with staff.

Albert St, Gumeracha and the school driveway which enters from it, allow easy access to the Bushfire Refuge by vehicles after an intense bushfire.
- Tall vegetation has been cleared from between the Bushfire Refuge and Albert Street.
- Adelaide Hills Council has a pruning program for tall street trees along Albert Street.

The main school car park, entered off Albert, is some distance from the Bushfire Refuge.
- Newsletter bushfire updates will remind families of this alternative entry point.
It is likely that other members of the Gumeracha community will shelter in the site Bushfire Refuge during a bushfire. To ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of all students:

- Classes will sit on the floor with their teacher at the southern end of the Main building downstairs double classroom.
- Community members will be required to remain in a separate area at the northern end.

A fully stocked first aid kit will be kept permanently in the First aid Room. It will be checked and restocked if necessary by the First Aid SSO at the start of each term.

There is no access to drinking water in the Bushfire Refuge.

- Two 20 litre plastic containers of drinking water and cups have been located in the Bushfire Refuge cupboard.
- The water containers will be refilled with fresh water by SSO every 3 weeks during Term 4 and Term 1.

There are no toilet facilities in the Bushfire Refuge. The nearest toilets are approximately 10 and 20 metres away within the building.

- In emergencies, the disabled toilet or the staff toilets could be accessed, which are within 10 and 20 metres inside the main building, respectively.

An Emergency Supplies Kit has been assembled in the Bushfire Refuge.

Student and staff medications have been listed, and are easily assembled and transported to the Bushfire Refuge by the Front Office SSO.

Student rolls and staff/visitor registers are readily available. SSO will accurately record:

- those present when the move to the Bushfire Refuge takes place
- those who have left the site before the move
- those who leave the site after the bushfire emergency has passed.

In order to ensure a safe and orderly operation, a decision to move all persons into the site Bushfire Refuge will be made when any of the following agreed ‘triggers’ are reached.

- CFS Information and Warning messages broadcast on the local ABC radio indicate a fire is moving towards Gumeracha.
- The local Emergency Services advise that a bushfire is likely to impact on the site.
- We are advised that a bushfire is burning the local district bounded by:-
  - Cudlee Creek-Lobethal Road
  - Lobethal-Mt Torrens Road
  - Mt Torrens Road (between Mt Torrens and Birdwood)
  - Cromer Road, Lucky Hit Road, Martin Hill Road and Hill Road (to the north of Birdwood and Kersbrook)
  - South Para Road (between Kersbrook and Cudlee Creek).
- There is a confirmed sighting of nearby smoke or flame.
TOTAL FIRE BAN DAY (SEVERE OR EXTREME)

On days of a Catastrophic FDI, as forecast and confirmed by the CFS, this school will be closed. The following information is for days when the school remains open – when the FDI is Severe or Extreme.

The Principal will inform students and staff in the ‘Daybook’ that a Total Fire Ban Day (Severe or Extreme) has been declared.

‘Total Fire Ban’ signs will be displayed in the staff room, classrooms, on student notice boards and at all site entrances.
- Laminated A3 signs kept in all classrooms will be placed in visible locations by all classroom teachers before 8.30am.

During the first lesson, students will be reminded of site bushfire emergency procedures and drills and referred to laminated bush fire emergency posters displayed in all classrooms.

Students will be reminded of the procedures to be followed if a school bus is overtaken by a bushfire.

The nominated staff member will monitor ABC Radio 891 for CFS Information and Warning Messages.

Student excursions away from the site will be cancelled for the day and rescheduled by Teacher and SSO.

In the event that excursions are arranged during the Bushfire Season, the organising teacher will be required to arrange back-up accommodation at another school close to the excursion site which could be used in the case of fire close to the return route.

Off site meetings for all staff will be cancelled.

The Principal will unlock and open all access and security gates around the site and ensure that no vehicles are blocking access points.

Staff members on yard duty will monitor weather conditions while students are on breaks or outside and report any concerns to the Principal.

The container of Emergency Supplies will be prepared by the Front Office SSO and be ready for transportation to the Bushfire Refuge.

The Front Office SSO will update student and staff medication list and prepare medicines for transportation.

Teacher will check that sprinkler systems and grounds irrigation are operating correctly and hoses are attached.

SSO will ensure mobile phones are working correctly and spare batteries are fully charged.
When a bushfire has been reported in the nominated local district, bounded by:-

- Cudlee Creek-Lobethal Road
- Lobethal-Mt Torrens Road
- Mt Torrens Road (between Mt Torrens and Birdwood)
- Cromer Road, Lucky Hit Road, Martin Hill Road and Hill Road (to the north of Birdwood and Kersbrook)
- South Para Road (between Kersbrook and Cudlee Creek).

the Principal will visit all classes and inform students and staff of its location.

The members of the site Emergency Response Team will be called together to put into place the pre determined bushfire emergency procedures.

The Principal will maintain a visual check of the surrounding area.

The nominated staff members will carefully monitor ABC Radio 891 for CFS Information and Warning Messages and provide site leaders with updates concerning the latest location of the bushfire front and any impact it may have on the site.

An alternative handset to the main landline has been installed which can operate in the event of power cuts.

The Principal will advise the Regional Office that a bushfire has been reported in the nominated local district.

The Principal will cancel all outdoor activities for students.

The Front office SSO will identify and list all students and staff who live in the area reported to be affected by the bush fire.

All classroom teachers and the Front Office SSO will record the names of any students who may be collected from the site by parents during the day.

The Principal will assess if it is safe for students to take outside recess and lunch breaks and notify all classes of their decision.

The Principal will prepare and test sprinkler systems and grounds irrigation systems.

The class teachers working in the designated Bushfire Refuge area will open and prepare the Bushfire Refuge

- eg close blinds and windows, wet towels, prepare drinking water, arrange appropriate locations for local community members, ready fire extinguishers, remove hazards from passageways etc

The SSO will ensure the alternative audible warning device is ready for use and operating correctly should power fail.

All class teachers/OHSC staff will encourage students to top up personal water bottles during the day so that they have adequate drinking water should a move
All class teachers will encourage students to assemble personal belongings (books, pencils, games, clothing, bags etc) and keep them close by should a move to the Bushfire Refuge become necessary.

All class teachers will encourage students to use the toilet regularly during the day.

All staff undertake their assigned roles and responsibilities.

The Front Office SSO will alert visitors and volunteers of the situation during the registration process and advise them of action to take should a move to the Bushfire Ready Building become necessary.

The Principal will liaise with SAPOL, Birdwood High School, and school bus drivers to determine any likely impact of the reported bushfire on school bus routes.

School buses will not leave site unless a clear directive given to the Principal by SAPOL or CFS Incident Management indicating bus routes are safe to travel.

If a bushfire prevents school buses leaving the site or students from boarding public buses, the teacher on duty will supervise students remaining on site until they are collected by parents.

**BUSHFIRE IN IMMEDIATE VICINITY OR IMPACTING ON SITE**

The ‘triggers’ for a move to the Bushfire Refuge have been detailed. All staff, students, visitors and parents are aware and prepared for the move that will take place when the ‘triggers’ are reached.

When a ‘trigger’ is reached, the agreed alarm signal or the gas powered siren will be sounded continuously by the Principal.

All students, staff and visitors will move to the Bushfire Refuge on hearing the siren or being informed personally by the Principal.

All staff will assist students to move to, and assemble in, the Bushfire Refuge.

The Principal or another member of the Emergency Response Team will turn on sprinkler and grounds irrigation systems after ensuring students in his/her care are safely in the Bushfire Refuge and determining that the task can be undertaken without placing themselves in undue danger.

All staff will take the fire extinguishers with them from their classrooms to the Bushfire Refuge.

- The fire extinguishers are to be placed on the table inside the doorway on arrival.

Staff will close all doors and windows and turn off air conditioners as rooms are vacated.
The Principal will ensure all site personnel are accounted for and in Bushfire Refuge.
- Classroom teachers will do a roll call of students in their care.
- Front Office SSO will monitor visitors and volunteers.

The Principal will ensure that staff and students from other associated sites are accounted for and accommodated appropriately.

The Principal will ensure that local community members are accommodated appropriately in an area separated from students.

The Emergency Response Team members will institute search procedures for missing persons if needed.

The Principal will advise the District Office of the move to the Bushfire Refuge and provide information about:
- The ‘trigger’ that has been reached and likely impact on the site.
- The number of ‘site’ students, staff and registered visitors taking shelter.
- The number of ‘off site’ students and staff present.
- The number of community members present.
- Emergency Services assistance immediately available.

The Emergency Response Team members will liaise with CFS /MFS units and other Emergency Services if on site.

All persons sheltering in the Bushfire Refuge will prepare for arrival and passage of the fire front. The Emergency Response Team will:
- ensure all persons are located away from windows and unnecessary movement is limited.
- provide regular updates at an appropriate level to students and adults.
- describe the situation that can be safely observed outside the building to all persons in the Bushfire Refuge.
- assist all students and adults to remain calm.
- outline possible plans of action after the front has passed with the students.

Classroom teachers will prepare for unexpected toileting of students.

The Emergency response Team members will check for and attempt to extinguish spot fires inside or impacting on the Bushfire Refuge as necessary.
- It is not expected that they will undertake major fire fighting activities.
- They are not expected to put themselves in any dangerous situations.

All staff will undertake their assigned roles and responsibilities.

**RECOVERY AFTER THE FIRE FRONT HAS PASSED**

The Principal will ensure no one leaves the Bushfire Refuge until the situation outside has been assessed as safe by the members of the Emergency Response Team or members of the Emergency Services.
The Emergency Response Team members will make an assessment of the need for, and if necessary, begin preparations to care for students for an extended period of time.

Nominated staff members will remain on duty until all students are collected from the site by their parents.

Snacks, drinking water, blankets, games, books etc are available to meet immediate and extended needs of students waiting to be collected by their parents.

The First Aid SSO will check for and treat any injuries.

The Emergency Response Team members will check the building for damage and burning embers.

Delegated member of Emergency Response Team will extinguish small fires in or near the Bushfire Refuge.

The Principal will advise the Regional Director and / or the Regional Office of the current situation as soon as the position becomes clear and it is safe to do so.
The Principal will refer media enquiries to the Regional Director.

The Emergency Response Team members will determine if there is a need to evacuate the Bushfire Refuge.

The Emergency Response Team members will determine an alternative safe location (possibly main town oval if appropriate) if required.

All staff members will begin to reunite families at a safe location when the situation has been declared safe and vehicles can safely access the site.

The Front Office SSO will record names of students and person collecting them as they leave the site.

All staff undertake their assigned roles and responsibilities.

The Principal, Emergency Response Team, staff and students (where appropriate) will undertake a debrief of the bushfire emergency situation and the procedures undertaken at an appropriate time shortly after the incident.

The Principal will seek support for students and staff from counsellors and social workers when appropriate.

The Emergency Response Team will review the effectiveness of staff instruction undertaken before the bushfire emergency in light of the experience in order to ensure that lessons learnt are captured for future benefit.

The Principal will arrange to have fire fighting systems checked and readied for use again.

The Front Office SSO will replenish the Emergency Supplies package.
The Principal will arrange an assessment of the site buildings once the area is declared safe.

The Principal will complete the relevant DECD report, available from www.crisis.sa.edu.au