



Northside

Christian College

Bushfire Preparedness Policy

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Rationale

It is important that all students are safe at Northside Christian College, as set out in the Student Pastoral Care Policy (Policy No. 12).

Bushfire preparedness is not just a concern for schools listed on the Bushfire At-Risk Register. Student transport to and from school, participation in offsite activities (including camps, excursions, and sporting activities) and the risk of localised fire events demonstrate the importance of bushfire preparedness for all schools.

As a bushfire may present a threat to student and staff safety, clear and consistent procedures are required for general preparedness for the fire season (fire danger period 1st November to 30th April), different types of Fire Danger Ratings and unpredicted bushfire threats.

These procedures have been designed to ensure that preventative strategies are implemented and to ensure that students and staff are prepared to respond in the event of a bushfire. This response may include pre-emptive planned closures of the College, evacuation or what to do in the event that evacuation is unsafe.

The preparation of this plan has been developed in accordance with the Northside Christian College Emergency Management and Critical Incident Plan.

General Information

The Bushfire Plan is to be reviewed annually during Term 3 each year to reflect any changes that may have taken place in:

- Department of Education or Government policy.
- VRQA minimum standards.
- Site facilities.
- Personnel normally on site.

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

- On days of Total Fire Ban.
- Catastrophic 'Code Red'.
- When there is a fire in the local district.
- When a bushfire is threatening or impacting 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. The Middle School building is the default Safer Location for Northside Christian College.

- This building has been prepared for a bushfire emergency and will safely accommodate a large portion of the persons normally at the College.

The Principal or delegated officer will forward a copy of the Bushfire Plan to the local Police and Fire Authorities for endorsement to ensure that safe and correct procedures have been identified for use during emergencies.

The Principal or delegated officer will forward a copy of the Bushfire Plan to all families of students of the site at the beginning of Term 1 each year. This may be published in the form of a Student or Parent Handbook or on the College website.

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

The Principal will include bushfire season reminders and information in College newsletters in each of the school terms when applicable.

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

Identifying the Risks

The College is at some risk each year during the bushfire season. It is particularly vulnerable to the west with a large area of dry grass located in the Norris Bank Parklands. The north/north-west winds during the summer months increase the risk associated with a potential grass fire.

Communication

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

Preparing for Bushfire Season

- The Principal must ensure all students and staff are aware of the College's bushfire response plan. It is also necessary to ensure that relief staff and parents and carers have been made aware of the College's Bushfire Plan.
- The Principal should establish contact with emergency services, including the local Fire Brigade and Police.
- Communication plans (including emergency contacts and a telephone tree) need to be in place for evacuation or planned closure.
- The College has an effectively working emergency warning or alert system and emergency communication equipment is available and working.
- The College has 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.
- The College is required to manage materials that may easily be ignited around buildings and facilities. The College Maintenance Plan requires a schedule for monitoring and removal of materials that may be easily ignited including branches overhanging buildings, debris and rubbish around and under buildings including gutters and dry grass and vegetation.
- The College also requires the safe storage of flammable materials.
- The Maintenance Plan also calls for the ongoing monitoring of emergency access to buildings and grounds.

Pre-emptive Closure

- The Principal is to notify staff and parents and carers using emergency contacts and the telephone tree of closure. This may take place by sending an SMS message.
- All other necessary parties are advised including (but not limited to) other schools that may have siblings at your school, community users of the school facilities, and on site contractors.

- 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 both physically at the College and electronically on the website.

During Evacuation

- The College will contact parents and carers via phone (SMS message) or email.
- The College has landlines and a mobile phone. It would be preferable that parents and carers restrict calling the College at this time to emergency calls only.

The Principal communicates directly with media as per the College Media Policy. Staff should not comment directly to media.

Reopening the School

- The Principal will advise the College community when the College will re-open.
- Parents and carers need to know when the College is reopened.
- The Notice of Planned Temporary School Closure should be physically removed from the College premises and website.
- All parties that were advised of closure (e.g. Out of hours users) should be advised of reopening.

Types of Fire Event

1. Total Fire Ban

In the event of a Total Fire Ban the **Bushfire Plan** will be invoked.

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.
- You must not undertake any other activities that may start a fire.

It is also necessary to ensure:

- All reasonable precautions are taken to prevent a bushfire starting.

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.

In the event of a catastrophic weather warning the **Bushfire Plan** will be invoked as per the flow chart at Appendix 2.

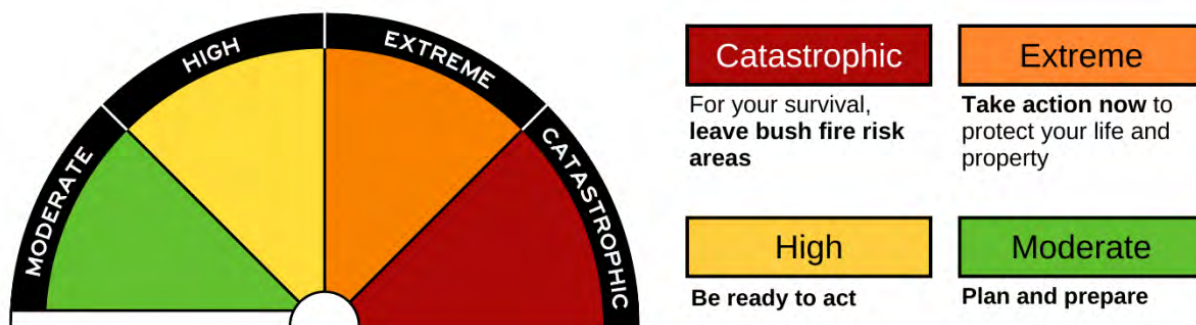


Illustration: Fire Danger Rating levels

2.1 Planned Pre-emptive Closure

The lead time for a planned closure varies depending on weather patterns, but every attempt is made to provide as much notice as possible to prepare written documentation for parents and carers.

The Principal needs to send letters to parents and carers via SEQTA and provide each staff member with a memo by email 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 College can therefore stand down its pre-emptive closure plans. The Principal will make a final decision to close the College no later than 4:30pm the day before the planned closure. If weather conditions become less severe after 4:30pm, the closure goes ahead regardless, in order to provide a level of certainty to parents and carers.

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 the CFA via <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au> and VicEmergency via emergency.vic.gov.au. The College acknowledges that VicEmergency app is essential for real-time monitoring.

2.3 Re-opening the School

Parents and carers need to know when the Catastrophic FDR has been downgraded and that it is therefore safe for their children to return to the College after a planned closure. The template letter to parents contains advice on how parents can monitor the situation. The College will need to put communication plans in place, such as placing a notice on the College website / Facebook and providing a phone number for parents to call for information about the reopening of the College. Letters are often sent to parents and carers through SEQTA and email. Consideration needs to be given to how parents who do not have Internet access or who have diverse needs (e.g. multicultural, students with disability) will be provided with information.

3. Bushfire

In the event of a bushfire threatening the school, the College will notify local Fire Department by calling 000 and the **Bushfire Plan** will be invoked by way of the school emergency siren.

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.



Illustration: Bushfire Warning Levels

3.1.1 Advice

If the College is likely to be threatened by the fire, activate the Emergency Management Plan immediately. Notify local fire department 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 College 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 College 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 the local fire department of your decision and relocation point.

If it is not safe to evacuate, direct all students, staff and visitors to the College's Safer Location. This location is the Middle School building.

3.2 Bushfire- Act

3.2.1 Response when a bushfire starts and the school is open

3.2.1.1 Evacuation Procedure

College to evacuate to off-site on advice from the local fire department.

The Off Site safer location for Northside Christian College during a bushfire is Bundoora Square. This is a five minute walk from the College.

- All classes remain with their teachers and allocated Learning Support Assistants.
- Students, staff, contractors, and visitors will be provided with N95 masks to minimise smoke inhalation.
- All other staff and visitors report to the Reception 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 Area Warden.
- Fire Wardens are designated to manage evacuation routes, liaise with staff. (See Section 9.0 of *Emergency Management Plan*)
- The Principal and Fire Wardens, will control this response until the arrival of emergency services who will then take over.
- Students and adults with known respiratory conditions will be identified and given special consideration.

Parent Access

Parents and carers will be informed when and where to pick up students upon advice from the Principal.

3.2.1.2 Safer Location Procedures – if evacuation is not possible

The College may be advised to stay on site.

- All classes remain with their teachers and allocated Learning Support Assistants.
- Students, staff, contractors, and visitors will be provided with N95 masks to minimise smoke inhalation.
- All classes in transportable buildings to be relocated to the Middle School building.
- All other staff and visitors report to the Reception 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 and liaise with staff.
- The Principal and area wardens, will control this response until the arrival of the Fire Rescue Victoria or emergency services who will then take over. Area wardens to note the nearest location of firefighting equipment.
- Students and adults with known respiratory conditions will be identified and given special consideration.

Parent Access

Parents and carers are 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

The Principal is to notify staff and parents using the emergency contact list of closure.

3.2.3 Recovery

The priorities for the College 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 College and College routine following the bushfire.
- Undertake a check of any equipment or stock used and arrange replacement / replenishment.
- Address any physical damage to the College, isolating areas if required and if necessary relocate to alternative accommodation.
- Attend to security if necessary.
- 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.

Bush Fire at Risk Register (BARR)

In addition to the requirements of this policy, schools listed on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Bushfire at Risk Register (BARR) must have in

place a number of further procedures and processes. Schools and education and care services considered to be at greatest risk of bushfire have been included on the DEECD Bushfire At-Risk Register and informed of their status on the register.

For more information, please refer to:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/bushfirerisk.aspx>

Northside Christian College is not listed on the BARR at the commencement of Semester 2 2023.

Schools and early childhood services at risk of grassfire - Category 4

Schools, kindergartens and child care facilities assessed to be at some risk of fire are placed on the department's Category 4 list. Inclusion on this list is a trigger for the school, kindergarten or child care facility to pre-emptively close on days forecast Catastrophic in their Bureau of Meteorology district.

For more information, please refer to:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/category4.aspx>

Northside Christian College is not listed on the Category 4 list at the commencement of Semester 2 2023.

Promoting the safety of children with a disability

At Northside Christian College, we acknowledge that people with a disability have the same rights and responsibilities as other members of the community and should be empowered to exercise those rights and responsibilities. In particular, people with a disability have the same rights as other members of the community to live free from abuse.

The College will ensure that appropriate considerations are made for students with disabilities when making arrangements for events that have a bushfire risk. Likewise, students with a disability will be appropriately considered when making decisions about school closures.

Education providers must comply with the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (the Standards) under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) (the Act). The Standards give students and prospective students with a disability the right to education and training opportunities on the same basis as students without a disability. The College will ensure that Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans are developed and followed during emergency situations.

Northside Christian College can promote the safety of children with a disability by:

- Acknowledging that children with a disability are particularly vulnerable and ensure our risk assessment processes considers their needs.
- Ensuring our school clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination and actively welcomes all children.
- Making sure the environment does not pose access difficulties.
- Being responsive to families regarding specific measures that may be required to ensure the safe participation of a child with a disability.
- Supporting our staff, other children and their families to understand and be inclusive of people with a disability.
- Thinking about how we can encourage participation and feedback from children with a disability and their families.

Responsibilities

The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Related Policies

Emergency Management Policy and Critical Incident Plan

Maintenance Policy

Media Policy

Student Pastoral Care Policy

References

Country Fire Authority (CFA) <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au>

Fire Rescue Victoria <https://www.frv.vic.gov.au>

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

Emergency Alert warning system www.emergencyalert.gov.au/

Australian Standard AS 3745-2010 www.as3745.net.au

Fire Station No 14 – Bundoora

Address: 1083 Plenty Road, Bundoora, 3083.

APPENDICIES

1. COMPLIANCE: Bushfire Preparation Checklist

Bushfire Preparation Check List for the Summer Months

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 College <i>Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan</i> includes a plan for dealing with bushfires.	
<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 3). 	
If school is on the Bushfire Zone Register, the Principal (or a nominated staff member) has established contact with emergency services.	N/A
<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 Management Plan procedures</i>. 	
Schools on the Bushfire Zone Register need to incorporate key bushfire messages in their curriculum.	N/A
Evaporative air conditioners – awareness of location of the switches and how to switch off the units.	N/A
Communication plans (include telephone tree – see Appendix D) 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.	
BPZ (20 metre radius), cleared of all rubbish, long dry grass, bark and flammable materials.	

Preparation and Response if your School is Closed when a Bushfire Starts

PREPAREDNESS – In place prior to bushfire season and maintained

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

Principal thoroughly familiar with their current <i>Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan</i> and where applicable their stand-alone bushfire plan. All staff members aware of their responsibilities in accordance with the plans.	ongoing
Principal has tested <i>Emergency Management Plan</i> and where applicable their stand-alone bushfire plan.	
Principal (or a nominated staff member) has established contact with emergency services, the local volunteer fire brigade, Police, your Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) or Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM), Refer to Emergency Alert warning system (www.emergencyalert.gov.au/)	
Communication plans (include telephone tree) are in place for evacuation or planned closure.	
Emergency contact list for parents, staff, other agencies etc. up to date and readily available (Part of Evacuation kit).	
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 are readily accessible (Part of Evacuation kit).	
Alternate schools or facilities where students and staff can be relocated safely have been identified.	
Arrangements are in place in relation to school buses (availability of buses if alternate school location is required)	

Preparation and Response if your School is Open when a Bushfire Starts

RESPONSE

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

If you notice a bushfire before having received any advice from the CFA or Fire Rescue Victoria, emergency services should be notified (000) and provided with details. If the College is likely to be threatened by the fire, activate the Emergency Management Plan immediately. Notify local fire station of your decision and relocation point.	
Turn off evaporative air conditioners. Undertake regular checks of school paying special attention to the evaporative air conditioners	
If ADVICE stage warning received by Principal:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> situation assessed by Principal; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> information sought on level of threat from the Fire Rescue Victoria or local fire station; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assistance sought on the availability of resources to transport and relocate students and staff off-site if required; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ABC local radio broadcasts (updated at quarter to and quarter past the hour in addition to news bulletins) monitored for change in level of warning to WATCH AND ACT or EMERGENCY WARNING. For up-to-date emergency warnings and advice, please go to VicEmergency via emergency.vic.gov.au. Assign a member of staff to monitor local radio, TV, websites for bushfire or weather alerts. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> class rolls checked to confirm absentees and visitor register checked for visitors currently in the school; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mobile telephones charged; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> emergency contacts list for parents, staff, other agencies, etc accessed; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evacuation kit accessed; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> confirm readiness of Safer Location 	
If Fire Rescue Victoria warning upgraded (WATCH AND ACT stage):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal's decision to leave or relocate students, staff and visitors off-site should be based on assessment of known information, current circumstances AND ONLY IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO. This may include advice from emergency services or observations at the time of the event. If the decision is made to activate relocation aspects of their Emergency Management Plan. Notify local fire station of your decision and relocation point. 	
If the Fire Rescue Victoria warning upgraded (EMERGENCY WARNING stage):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The College should activate their Emergency Management Plan in regards to evacuation, Consideration will include; location of fire and ability to travel safely to the selected relocation point. Notify the local fire station of your decision and relocation point. RELOCATE OFF-SITE ONLY IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If it is not safe to relocate students, staff and visitors to your selected relocation point, you will need to direct all students, staff and visitors to the pre-determined schools Safer Location, which is the Middle School building. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class rolls and visitor register rechecked after relocating staff, students and visitors off-site, and Emergency Services Incident Controller advised of anyone missing. 	

Template Letter to Parents Advising of Pre-emptive Closure

RE: BUSHFIRE ALERT NOTIFICATION OF TEMPORARY SCHOOL CLOSURE

Dear Parents and Carers,

Based on advice from Fire Rescue Victoria, Northside Christian College will be temporarily closed on <insert day, date>, due to a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating (FDR) for the Bundoora area. A Catastrophic FDR means that if a fire starts, it is likely to be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving.

The final decision to pre-emptively close the school will be confirmed by the College no later than 4.30 pm on <insert date of the day before the declared day>. If the forecast changes after that deadline, the closure will stand, regardless of improvements to the weather conditions on the afternoon of <insert date of the day before the declared day> or overnight. The intention is to limit confusion or uncertainty for parents and to allow you ample time to make alternative child care arrangements.

You will be advised of the confirmation of closure, or its reversal, by a note sent home with your child on <insert day and date of the day before the planned closure>. If your child is absent on that day, the school will phone you to advise whether the closure will go ahead as planned. Please ensure that we have up to date phone contact details for you.

It is anticipated that the College will only be required to close for a single day at a time, but this will depend on the weather. The school website will contain a notice to advise you of the current status of the school closure and when it is expected to reopen.

I ask that you monitor local media and the VicEmergency website via emergency.vic.gov.au or current information about fire danger ratings and notification of schools reopening. Staying tuned to ABC Local Radio in your locality is advisable.

Children may experience some anxiety as a result of this closure. You are encouraged to reassure your children of the safe environment we will provide for them on their return. We will be taking measures to make the College safe before children return.

While no formal education program is available during this time, children are encouraged to:

- continue unfinished work;
- undertake research;
- complete due assignments;
- review recent school work;
- play educational games; and
- read.

This precautionary measure will maximise children's safety. Thank you for your cooperation.

<Principal Name>

Principal

Template Memo to Staff Advising of Pre-emptive Closure

RE: BUSHFIRE ALERT NOTIFICATION OF TEMPORARY SCHOOL CLOSURE

MEMO TO STAFF

Based on advice from Fire Rescue Victoria, Northside Christian College will be temporary closed on <insert day, date>, due to a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating (FDR) for the Bundoora area. A Catastrophic FDR means that if a fire starts, it is likely to be uncontrollable, unpredictable, and fast moving.

The final decision to pre-emptively close the College will be confirmed by me no later than 4:30 pm on <insert date of the day before the declared day>. If the forecast changes after that deadline, the closure will stand, regardless of improvements to the weather conditions on the afternoon of <insert date of the day before the declared day> or overnight. The intention is to limit confusion or uncertainty for parents and to allow you ample time to make alternative child care arrangements.

You will be advised of the confirmation of closure, or its reversal, by me on <insert day and date of the day before the planned closure>. If you are absent on that day, the College will phone you to advise whether the closure will go ahead as planned. Please ensure that we have up to date phone contact details for you.

It is anticipated that the College will only be required to close for a single day at a time, but this will depend on the weather. The College website will contain a notice to advise you of the current status of the school closure and when it is expected to reopen.

I ask that you monitor local media for current information about fire danger ratings and notification of schools reopening. Staying tuned to ABC Local Radio in your locality is advisable. For up-to-date emergency warnings and advice, please go to VicEmergency via emergency.vic.gov.au. Alternatively you can call me for additional up to date information.

During this period of closure you will be considered to be on duty and are to undertake professional duties from home (e.g. preparation, planning, assessment and reporting). Measures will be taken to make sure the College is safe before you return.

This precautionary measure will maximise staff and student safety. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

<Principal Name>

Principal

Notice of Planned Temporary School Closure

Please be advised that as a result of a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating for <day, date>, it is planned to temporarily close the College on that day.

The final decision to close the College will be confirmed by the Principal no later than 4:30pm on <insert date of the day before the declared day>. If conditions have improved sufficiently by that time, the College will open as normal on <day, date>. If not, closure will go ahead.

For further information please contact the Principal on (03) 9467 2499.

Thank you for your cooperation.

<Principal Name>

Principal

Template Letter to Parents Confirming Pre-emptive Closure

RE: BUSHFIRE ALERT CONFIRMATION OF TEMPORARY SCHOOL CLOSURE

Dear Parents and Carers,

The planned pre-emptive closure of Northside Christian College > on <insert day, date of planned closure> of which I advised you on <insert date that initial letter was sent> will go ahead as planned. The Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating for that day has not changed, so the safest option remains to close the school for the day.

It is anticipated that the College will only be required to close for the single day, but this will depend on the weather. The College website will contain a notice to advise you of the current status of the school closure and when it is expected to reopen.

I ask that you monitor local media for current information about fire danger ratings and notification of schools reopening. Staying tuned to ABC Local Radio in your locality is advisable. For up-to-date emergency warnings and advice, please go to VicEmergency via emergency.vic.gov.au. Alternatively you can call the College at (03) 9467 2499.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work to make our College as safe as possible for your children.

<Principal Name>

Principal

Template Letter to Parents Reversing Pre-emptive Closure

BUSHFIRE ALERT REVERSAL OF TEMPORARY SCHOOL CLOSURE

Dear Parents and Carers,

The planned pre-emptive closure of Northside Christian College on <insert day, date of planned closure> of which I advised you on <insert date that initial letter was sent> will not go ahead. The Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating for that day has been downgraded. Accordingly, the College will open and operate as normal.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work to make our College as safe as possible for your children.

<Principal Name>

Principal

BUSHFIRE ALERT

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY SCHOOL CLOSURE

Please be advised that as a result of a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating, the College has been temporarily closed.

The College will re-open on advice from Fire Rescue Victoria.

If you have any further questions or concerns about bushfire, please refer to the VicEmergency website or stay tuned to ABC Local Radio.

For further information please contact the Principal on (03) 9467 2499.

Thank you for your cooperation.

<Principal Name>

Principal

Know your fire danger rating

Fire danger rating	MODERATE Plan and prepare	HIGH Be ready to act	EXTREME Take action now to protect your life and property	CATASTROPHIC For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas
Fire behaviour	Most fires can be controlled.	Fires can be dangerous.	Fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous.	If a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay up to date and be ready to act if there is a fire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a heightened risk. Be alert for fires in your area. Decide what you will do if a fire starts. If a fire starts, your life and property may be at risk. The safest option is to avoid bushfire risk areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are dangerous fire conditions. Check your bushfire plan and that your property is fire ready. If a fire starts, take immediate action. If you and your property are not prepared to the highest level, go to a safer location well before the fire impacts. Reconsider travel through bushfire risk areas. Expect hot, dry and windy conditions. Leaving bushfire risk areas early in the day is your safest option. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are the most dangerous conditions for a fire. Your life may depend on the decisions on you make, even before there is a fire. For your survival, do not be in bushfire risk areas. Stay safe by going to a safer location early in the morning or the night before. If a fire starts and takes hold, lives and properties are likely to be lost. Homes cannot withstand fires in these conditions. You may not be able to leave and help may not be available.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor conditions and official sources for warnings. Adhere to local regulations governing fire activity. Ensure any industrial or agricultural activities adhere to relevant industry guidelines. If a fire starts near you, take action immediately to protect your life. Do not wait for a warning. 				



Procedures for the Bushfire Season

Michael Bond, Deputy Principal

Northside Christian College has developed and regularly reviews the College's Bushfire Preparedness Policy (Policy No. 18). Bushfire preparedness is not just a concern for schools listed on the Bushfire At-Risk Register. Student transport to and from school, participation in offsite activities (including camps, excursions and sporting activities) and the risk of localised fire events demonstrate the importance of bushfire preparedness for all schools.

The College's Bushfire Preparedness Policy documents procedures designed to ensure that preventative strategies are implemented and to ensure that students and staff are prepared to respond in the event of a bushfire. This response may include pre-emptive planned closures of the College, evacuation or what to do in the event that evacuation is unsafe. The preparation of this plan has been developed in accordance with the Northside Christian College Emergency Management and Critical Incident Plan.

We wish to advise that the College may cancel camps or excursions, or may even be required to close the school when Emergency Services declare a Code Red (Catastrophic) fire danger day, or when the risk of bush fire is heightened. Parents will be advised (by SMS and other means) if the College is to close, or if camps or excursions are to be cancelled, with as much forward notice as may be possible.

It is important that all families, particularly those in bush fire prone or high risk areas, have a family fire safety plan. The plan should include information about alternative care arrangements for children in the event that the College is required to close. Families are encouraged to practise the plan and be familiar with procedures to be followed in the case of a bush fire or house fire.

Northside Christian College is not listed on the Department of Education's Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR).

For up-to-date information on this year's fire season please refer to:

- ~ VicEmergency: <https://emergency.vic.gov.au>
- ~ VicEmergency Hotline: 1800 226 226



Catastrophic Event Flow Chart

In the event of a catastrophic weather warning the **Bushfire Plan** will be invoked as per the following flow chart:

PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSE TO Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating

