

Bushfire & Grassfire Preparedness

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to detail the procedures and management responsibilities that Corner Inlet College has to its students and the school community to minimize potential risks and be in a suitable state of preparedness for any bushfire & grassfire related incident.
Scope:	All school staff, students and the school community
Implemented by:	Principal
Approved by:	CIC Board
Reviewed:	Every two years, after an incident, or regulatory changes arise or improvements are identified through internal review.
Communicated via:	School website, Staff Handbook, Parent Handbook, Policies and Procedures Manual

Overview

Corner Inlet College is committed to ensuring the highest standards of care, safety and welfare for students, staff and the school community. Corner Inlet College recognizes that in all its activities it has a duty of care to identify, assess and control risks so that the possibility of harm is minimized or eliminated. Corner Inlet College is also committed to meeting the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359 and the Child Safe Standards.

Corner Inlet College is not on the Bushfire at Risk Register but it's a category 4 bushfire and grassfire risk area (high risk). As a result, our school will close on the days forecasted to be Catastrophic fire danger rating day, NOBODY will be in attendance at the school.

POLICY

This Policy should be read in conjunction with our Emergency Management Plan where details of management tasks, contacts and roles and responsibilities of key personnel are documented should our school emergency management plan be enacted due to bushfire or grassfire.

Any activity or excursion that occurs on a day of extreme fire danger and total fire ban will be **cancelled or recalled** as deemed necessary by school leadership, even at short notice.

Key Responsibilities

All Staff will be responsible for:

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- Ensuring they are familiar with the Emergency Management Plan, this policy and their responsibilities within it.
- Ensuring they participate fully in all drills conducted.
- Undertaking training provided by the school for any specific roles they have as part of the Emergency Management Plan.
- Ensuring all flammable materials within their area of responsibility are identified on the school chemical register and arranging for appropriate storage in flammable resistant cabinets.

Ensuring all building exits are continuously kept clear of obstructions via regular workplace inspections (refer to the Emergency Maintenance Schedule).

All Teaching Staff will be responsible for:

- Ensuring they are familiar with emergency procedures for each excursion or camps they participate in.
- Ensuring that emergency procedures are explained to students as soon as practical after arrival at excursion site or campsites.
- Planning to cover arrangements if an excursion or camps needs to be cancelled or recalled because of bushfire and grassfire threat.
- Committing to training for specific roles and responsibilities in preparing for, monitoring and executing emergency procedures.

The Principal will be responsible for:

- Working with relevant staff and maintenance staff to regularly monitor and remove materials that may be regarded as bushfire and grassfire hazards.
- Completing/Inspecting the emergency maintenance schedule of work every term, including October and January of each school year prior and during the bushfire/grassfire season. This would include clearing branches overhanging buildings, debris and rubbish around and under buildings including gutters and dry grass and vegetation.
- Working with the maintenance staff and teaching staff to ensure that any flammable substances are stored appropriately.
- Ensuring that relevant staff are aware of the Emergency Management Plan, Emergency Maintenance Schedule, this policy and their roles within this and participate in emergency drills each term.
- Ensuring that staff always cooperate to maintain integrity of classroom and office exit points.
- Ensuring that all visitors to our school are aware of our emergency procedures (as appropriate).
- Undertaking appropriate induction for staff including volunteers and contractors.
- Maintaining a register of bushfire/grassfire emergency equipment (refer to Appendix 1 below) and ensuring it is in working order, including water supplies and equipment, fire hydrants, hose reels and extinguishers, alarms, first aid materials and medical equipment, fire blankets and communication systems)
- Ensuring that all entrances are kept clear and that there is appropriate access to facilities and grounds for emergency vehicles. Keys are located in the main office for locked gates.
- Ensuring all assembly points designated on the Emergency Management Plan have appropriate access to emergency equipment.

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- Ensuring regular checks of all fire equipment by the CFA representative.

Site Preparedness

Corner Inlet College will ensure site preparedness by regularly managing materials that may easily be ignited around buildings and facilities and by maintaining an up to date Emergency Management Plan and Emergency Maintenance Schedule.

Communication of bushfire/grassfire information

Parents will be notified at every induction day, that they will be contacted in the event of a Catastrophic fire danger rating day the afternoon before via a note sent home and text message. This information is also provided to parents in the newsletter at the start of each year and again prior to the summer/bushfire season.

No staff will remain on site when the school is closed in the event of a Catastrophic fire danger rating. We will also cancel any offsite activities (such as school camps and excursions).

Ahead of the fire danger period, Corner Inlet College will complete the activities outlined in the [bushfire/grassfire readiness checklist schools \(DOCX\)](#)

On non-Catastrophic fire danger rating days, in the event of bushfire/grassfire or elevated risk, the School will maintain a heightened state of readiness and continuously monitor the situational bushfire/grassfire risk by ensuring open lines of communication with local emergency services, staff, students, parents and the school community.

Corner Inlet College will comply with the VRQA Guidelines on bushfire preparedness.

Staff training in bushfire/grassfire preparedness

Appropriate training will be provided to staff. Staff will practice their roles and responsibilities through regular/annual fire drills, especially during the October-April bushfire season and to familiarise themselves with the school policies, maintenance schedule and evacuation protocols. Our school also maintains up to date evacuation plans with updated bushfire emergency contact numbers in every classroom and office area.

Annual visits from CFA

The CFA will conduct an audit and safety check of our fire safety equipment yearly. Staff will be provided with training on the use of fire extinguishers. We will invite the CFA education truck once a year for an additional fire safety education session for our students.

Emergency contact numbers

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Emergency numbers are located in the emergency management plan (document) and located in each classroom and office areas.

PROCEDURES FOR THE BUSHFIRE SEASON

NO RATING	MODERATE	HIGH	EXTREME	CATASTROPHIC
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Fire danger ratings and warnings have been introduced in Victoria to provide clear direction on the safest options for preserving life. Schools – and children’s services – identified as being at highest or significant risk of bushfire and grassfire risk will be closed on days declared by fire authorities to be a Catastrophic fire danger rating day.

Where possible, we will provide parents with up to three days’ notice of a planned closure. We will contact them directly by letter with advice on planned closures and will confirm the decision to close by 12 noon the day before the planned closure. The communication process at our school will be:

- A notice will be sent to all families as soon as we have notification of a Catastrophic fire danger rating day. This may be up to 3 days in advance.
- ***The notice will have a return slip that we request be returned THE FOLLOWING DAY.***
- families with absent children or those who do not send back the notification will be phoned directly to ensure they are aware of the closure.
- Signs will be erected at several locations around the school announcing the possible closure.
- On the day prior, a notice will be sent to all families with confirmation of the Catastrophic fire danger rating day closure. We will phone families whose children are not in attendance on that day.

We ask that all families cooperate in this process. The communication logistics are huge for us and will be made far more difficult if families do not return the acknowledgement slip.

Please note that, on Catastrophic fire danger rating days, NOBODY will be in attendance at the school.

Once confirmed, the decision to close will not change, regardless of improvements in the weather forecast. This is to avoid confusion and to help families plan alternative care arrangements for their child. No staff will remain on site when the school is closed by the threat of fire. We will also cancel any offsite activities (such as school camps and excursions).

What can parents do?

Make sure your family’s Bushfire Survival Plan is up-to-date and includes alternative care arrangements in an event that the school is closed. Make sure we have your current contact

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details, including your mobile phone numbers. Keep in touch with us by reading our newsletters and by talking to your child's teacher or any other member of the teaching staff.

If your child is old enough, talk to them about bushfires and your family's Bushfire Survival Plan.

You can access more information about school closures on the Department of Education and Training website – see www.education.vic.gov.au/bushfires.

For up-to-date information on fire season, visit the CFA website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au or call the 24-hour Victorian Bushfires Information Line on 1800 240 667.

Related Documentation:

Corner Inlet College Emergency Management Plan

Corner Inlet College Maintenance Schedule

VRQA Guidelines on Bushfire Preparedness

External Resources:

- www.education.vic.gov.au/bushfires
- [Bushfire and Grassfire Preparedness: Policy | VIC.GOV.AU | Policy and Advisory Library](#)
- www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Related Policies:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Supervision Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy

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Appendix 1: BUSHFIRE EQUIPMENT REGISTER (TEMPLATE)

EQUITMENT	DATE OF UPDATE	INSPECTED BY	CONDITION	LOCATION	COMMENTS
Fire Hydrant					
Hose Reels					
Sprinkler Systems					
Alarms					
First Aid Materials					
Fire Blankets					
Communication Systems					
Extinguishers					