

BUSHFIRE POLICY

Rationale

Students travel up to 200 kilometres per day to attend Tenison Woods College. Pine and gum plantations surround Mount Gambier and are significant fire hazards during our hot summers. Given that students travel on public transport and school buses, it is essential that effective procedures are in place to ensure that students do not travel to and from home in any areas where there is a serious risk of an active bushfire.

Fire Ban Rating

In the warmer months of the year, fire bans or restrictions are determined for various South Australian regions by the Country Fire Service (CFS) at http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/news_media/current_incidents.jsp

Bushfire procedures for the College are aligned with the State's Fire Danger Ratings scale.

Category	Action for schools
CATASTROPHIC	CANCELLED: All Regional bus services travelling through the affected Fire Ban District
EXTREME	Tenison Woods College to take advice of fire authorities in high risk areas regarding regional bus cancellations.
SEVERE	Regional bus services operate
VERY HIGH	Regional bus services operate
HIGH	Regional bus services operate
LOW – MODERATE	Regional bus services operate

Catastrophic Category

Where a **catastrophic fire** danger rating is forecast for the Lower South East District, Tenison Woods College will cancel **all** regional bus services travelling through the affected Fire Ban District.

Under the direction of the Principal or Principal's Delegate, the Tenison Woods community will be notified by the Front Office and Public Relations (PR) Department of these actions via an EdSmart broadcast, Facebook, webpage, email and SMS. The Police and ABC local radio will also be informed. As part of this notification, parents will be advised that their children are not required to attend school on this day as travelling through a fire prone area is dangerous.

Procedures for a Catastrophic Fire Ban Day

- In days of extreme weather, the College will monitor the CFS website to determine the fire ban rating for the following day and inform the Principal or Principal's delegate;
- The Principal or Principal's delegate will inform the PR Department and issue an order to cancel regional buses;
- The Principal or Principal's delegate will inform the local police of this decision;
- If a notification of a catastrophic fire ban day is received prior to school concluding the previous day, all affected bus students and the bus companies will be notified prior to leaving school;
- The PR Department will also issue an alert via an EdSmart broadcast, the school website, Facebook page, email system and the SMS system;
- The Principal or Principal's delegate will notify all school bus services of the decision to cancel the day's bus services.

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Fire Response

If there is a fire in the College service area the Principal or Principal's Delegate will contact CFS to determine:

- The location of the fire;
- Where it is expected to move next;
- The risks faced by people in the area;
- What the public is advised to do about those risks; and
- What the CFS is doing about the situation.

ABC Radio is the official Bushfire Information and Warning station. Should Bushfire Information and Warning Messages be issued, they will be aired on this radio station. It is the responsibility of each member of the community on days of high fire danger to listen to this station for information about fires that may be burning in the area.

Key expectations of staff, students and families

In collaboration with the relevant Emergency Services personnel and the CFS, the College Leadership Team will assess the potential risk of the hazard and determine the required response.

If it is deemed unsafe for students to travel through a particular area, then students will be kept at school until families can arrange for them to be picked up.

Procedures

In responding to bushfire and/or natural disaster alerts, the following procedures will apply.

1. Bushfire alert

The Principal or Principal's Delegate will email **All Staff** the relevant details of the hazard and any action to be taken. Staff will need to log on to the computer in their classroom and access this email. Staff will be alerted to this via a PA announcement.

2. Bushfire response

During the school day, in the event of a bushfire in the region which poses a risk to students travelling home on the College's regional bus services, the buses will not be permitted to leave the grounds. Children will be kept at school and cared for by staff, volunteers and welfare services for as long as is necessary and/or until arrangements for their wellbeing are finalised.

In the event that students remain at the College due to a bushfire, the College will endeavour to contact parents via SMS, Email, Website and Social Media platforms and the College phone 8725 5455 will be staffed. In the event that communications to the College are not functioning, parents are encouraged to contact the Bushfire Information Hotline on 1300 362 361.

3. Bushfire Management Plan

The Leadership Team will enact a communications and child safety procedure for each hazard identified. Information will be communicated to the relevant media outlets and recorded information will be placed on the College website at www.tenison.catholic.edu.au and other relevant communication platforms. Students will be supervised in the Barrie Holmes Stadium or the Boardroom until the *all clear* approval is gained from Emergency Services. Parents and family seeking to collect their children will need to do so in person or communicate their instructions to the College.

4. Communications strategy

The Leadership Team will maintain contact with the relevant Emergency Services personnel. Relevant information relating to the hazard will also be posted on the College website and regular updates will be communicated from the Emergency Services hotline to keep staff and students informed of the situation where necessary.

In the event of a power failure, the school will maintain supervised care of affected students in the vicinity of the hall until alternative transport arrangements can be made, or families can come to collect their children from the Barrie Holmes Stadium area via the White Avenue entrance.

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Summary

Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating

On days when a **Catastrophic Fire Danger Day** has been forecast for the Lower South East District (Region 5), the schools regional bus service **WILL NOT** operate.

An alternative means of transport for students to and from school on these days is at the discretion and responsibility of parents/care givers.

Parents/care givers have the options of either transporting their children to and from school or keeping them at home on Catastrophic Fire Danger Days.

It is recommended that all parents/caregivers implement their Bushfire Survival Plans and monitor:

- CFS website: www.cfs.sa.gov.au,
- CFS hot line: 1300 362 361
- CFS free app for iPhone and Android phones
- ABC Radio: 1476AM or 1161AM

The College will remain open on catastrophic fire days for students who live in the town or have evacuated to the town.

When a day of Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating is forecast on the **morning of the day** of the conditions affected sites will remain open and **buses will operate as usual** unless advised otherwise by the authorised Emergency Services personnel.

Cancellation of Afternoon Buses due to Adverse Conditions

In the event of fires threatening a bus OR bus routes – any affected buses WILL NOT be permitted to leave the College until it is declared safe by the CFS. Children will be kept at school and cared for by staff, volunteers and welfare services for as long as is necessary. Parents / caregivers will be contacted as soon as practically possible.

Children will be released only to:

1. Their parents; or
2. To other persons authorised by the parents:
 - In writing
 - Documented phone call

Activities during Extreme Temperatures (whether or not there is a Total Fire Ban)

On days of extreme heat (above 36°C) the College will carry out a risk assessment to determine if any excursions that are planned outside of the school will proceed. If a fire ban day is declared in our district, staff and students must remain on site for the day.

See the *Hot Weather Policy* for further information.

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