



BUSHFIRE POLICY





Rationale

The safety of our students, staff, and visitors is of paramount importance to St John's Lutheran School. The school does not want any student or member of the school community to be placed at risk from a bushfire. It is the policy of St John's Lutheran School that in the case of an emergency, the first duty of the staff is the safety and welfare of the students.

The staff need to be aware of initiatives which may be taken by other authorities such as the Police, Country Fire Service and State Emergency Service. In all emergency situations the staff should ensure that full cooperation is given to these authorities and that any directions lawfully given by any member of these authorities is carried out.

Parents must be aware of the actions which are to be taken by staff in an emergency situation so that they will be able to know the whereabouts of the students and arrange to take charge of them as soon as reasonably possible.

Definition

Bushfire is a fire that is burning through bush land with the potential to move quickly and unpredictably in extreme weather conditions.

Aims

To provide guidelines in the areas of;

1. Bus travel to and from school
2. Private travel to and from school – staff and students
3. Excursions and camps in bushfire prone areas
4. Bushfire safety on the St John's School grounds.

The SACFS *Bushfire Management Plan - Risk Register - March 2018* determined the site and surrounding landscape of St John's Lutheran School to be of **high risk**. As a result, St John's will determine in advance whether the campus will open on days declared **catastrophic**.

As detailed in this policy, St John's Lutheran School reserves the right to

- Cancel school on catastrophic days (CDs)
- Cancel bus travel for SJLS students on catastrophic days
- Cancel bus travel for SJLS students on non-catastrophic days where there is deemed to be a risk to safety
- Cancel bus travel for SJLS students to areas with no fire activity, but where the bus travels through an area declared as presenting risk or declared Catastrophic
- Retain students at the school for parent / caregiver collection until the perceived threat has passed
- Release students to a nominated alternate care when a parent has directly contacted the school and given instruction

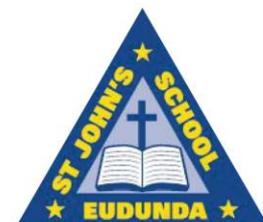
Emergency Services Contacts

- CFS Emergency 000
- CFS Hotline [fire information] 1300 362 361
- CFS Headquarters 8115 3300
- Police - Eudunda: 8581 1100
- Kapunda: 8566 2266
- Nuriootpa: 8568 6620
- Gawler: 8522 0400



St John's School Emergency Phone Contacts

- (08) 8581 1282
- Principal, Michael Bowmer mobile: 04252 339 239



Learning to Serve

Communication

As part of the planned bushfire management strategy, the predominant communication with St John's families will occur through the school's closed Facebook page and SMS.

St John's families should be aware that the school reserves the right to cancel any and all bus travel regardless of the presence of fire activity. Given that the school is located in the Mid North if a catastrophic day is declared in the Mid North, no students will be permitted to travel home by bus.

In the event that communication with families is not possible (power outage, no phone services etc), the school will enact this policy and contact parents/caregivers as soon as is practicable.

Communicating that a catastrophic day has been declared

Normally the declaration of a catastrophic day will occur between 4pm and 6pm on the day preceding the catastrophic day. If this declaration is made during the school's opening hours, and if this information is provided to the school, then St John's will notify parents via school's closed Facebook page and Seesaw. Families should not rely upon St John's to be the sole source of communicating the declaration of a catastrophic day.

Ultimately it is the responsibility of each family to ascertain if the 'next day' has been determined as catastrophic. If this is the case, then each family should enact their bushfire survival plan which includes deciding if your child/children will be permitted to travel to the school by bus. Families are reminded that some bus operators will still run on catastrophic days, while others won't – so it is imperative that families have a plan to avoid the risks of children being left at bus stops when buses may not be running. Further in this policy, advice is provided to parents/caregivers concerning which buses may run on catastrophic days.

On the day that has been declared catastrophic, St John's will...

- notify all staff and families via the school's Facebook page or SMS (as soon as is practicable) that a catastrophic declaration has been made.

In the case that a catastrophic day be declared during the school day (after students have arrived) or where St John's determines there to be potential risk to students travelling on bus services, the school will...

- notify all staff and families via above communication. This will confirm which bus routes will be cancelled.

Bus travel on a day declared as catastrophic

St John's students travel on DECD, Link SA, Keller's and St John's owned buses. The following outlines the procedures for all bus services / operators / services.

While the following details the procedure for bus travel on days declared catastrophic, St John's families are reminded that the school reserves the right to cancel services where there is a perceived risk to students, even if the day has not been declared catastrophic.

DECD Bus travel

DECD operate the following services-

On days declared catastrophic, it is the policy of DECD to cancel all bus services.

LINK SA Bus Travel (www.linksa.sa.com.au) Link SA operate the following services-

- Australia Plains
- Neales Flat
- Julia/Hampden
- Robertstown



- Bower
- Hansborough

St John's Bus Travel

St John's operates one bus route and does use its own bus for the purpose of excursions, transporting students to school sanctioned events and activities.



Where it is known that a bushfire is likely to threaten part of a route, the bus driver, under no circumstances, should depart the school before obtaining clearance from the Principal.

Where unexpected bushfire threatens a bus in transit, no attempt should be made to drive along roadways obscured by smoke or flame, unless a clear direction to do so is given by a Fire Control Officer. In the event that no direction is received the driver should...

- reverse the route, return to a safe refuge and notify, as soon as possible, the Principal, Bus Coordinator and local emergency service
- immediately designate a staff member to monitor conditions and communicate with school and relevant authorities.

Declaration of catastrophic day in the Mid North District will see the cancellation of...

- All buses

Alternate Student Collection and Accommodation (for bus travelling students)

In the event that bus travel is cancelled, and students remain at the school, St John's will...

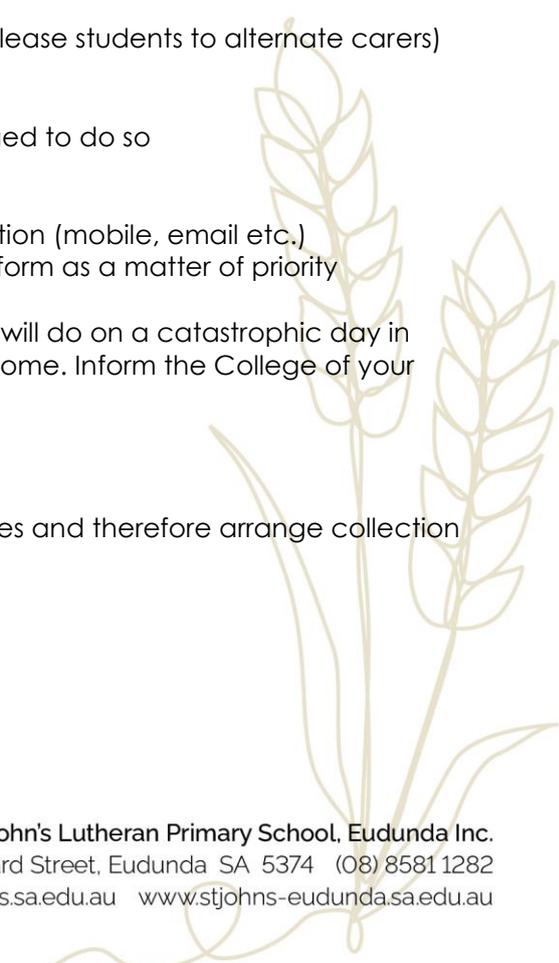
- require students to be picked up and signed out by parents/caregivers
- only release students to an alternate carer if express permission has been given by parents (written note or phone call.
- endeavour to maintain contact with families

In the event that students remain at the school, the following roles have been assigned. Nominated staff are required at the school until released by the Principal...

- Principal – communication with emergency services / media
- Admin – communication with families (sign in and out students / release students to alternate carers)
- Receptionist – manage phones
- nominated teaching staff – student supervision
- Teaching staff who are able to remain at the school are encouraged to do so

Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities

- ensure St John's has up to date parent/caregiver contact information (mobile, email etc.)
- complete the Alternate Student Collection and Accommodation form as a matter of priority
- take steps to determine if a catastrophic day has been declared
- have a bush fire plan that includes knowing in advance what you will do on a catastrophic day in relation to whether your children will be going to school or staying home. Inform the College of your decision
- talk to your children about your bushfire plan
- be familiar with this policy
- monitor radio station ABC891 on a battery operated radio
- respond to a decision made by Faith College to cancel bus services and therefore arrange collection of children from Faith College



Circumstances whereby the school would 'lock down' and prevent all students from leaving

In the event that a bushfire was to threaten the immediate community (including surrounding towns), St John's reserves the right to 'lock down' and retain all students after the official school day has concluded. In this case parents/caregivers would be notified by Facebook/SMS and would be required to collect students when safe to do so.



Bushfire Safety at the school

The school is located within the Mid North fire ban district and the official fire danger season usually runs from 1st December to 30th April. The area around the school is partly treed and partly cleared and the fire history in the area is limited. The school has been assessed as having a high-risk and is not in a safe zone during catastrophic fire danger days.

The designated fire refuge is the Eudunda Oval but will only be a refuge if the school is at risk.

Guiding Principles:

- Safety of students comes first, then staff and all people present
- No student will be left unattended at any time
- St John's Bushfire Policy applies to all people on site at the time of the incident
- The Principal (or delegated Teacher in charge in the absence of the Principal) will be the person in charge at all times, unless Emergency services take over
- The Principal will make the declaration of emergency and advise staff to either:
 - I. evacuate buildings to the top carpark flagpole (Evacuation siren)
 - II. evacuate to the hall (phone call / tell class in person)
 - III. move selected classes or personnel to another area (*conducted by phoning each class or speaking to each teacher*)
 - IV. initiate lockdown of students to their classrooms or suitable building (hall)

The Principal or delegate will advise Emergency Services of any action taken by the school if appropriate

The Principal has the authority to determine which course of action is appropriate, given the information they have about conditions, students, local circumstances, location of families, building construction etc.

Parent Awareness of Action

Should any fire occur at or near the school, children will be kept at the school until such time as the disaster has passed and/or travel is deemed to be safe. They will be under control of the Principal or the Principal's delegate and will not be released to anyone except parents or guardians, unless direct contact has been made with that parent. Parents are to be informed of this policy annually through the school newsletter.

Description of School and Environment

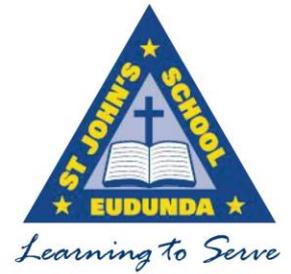
St John's Lutheran School is located at 8 Ward Street, EUDUNDA. There is vehicle access to the school from the carpark entrance on Kapunda Street. Access, for authorised vehicles, can be gained from Ward street on both the top and bottom sides of the school. Further access can be gained from the top side of Kapunda street via the bus shed entrance gate at the rear of the hall.

Students are drawn from Kapunda, Marrabel, Hansborough, Emu Downs, Backsprings, Robertstown, Neales Flat, Sutherlands, Bower, Australia Plains, Hampden, Julia and Eudunda areas.

Around 50% of students travel to and from school on DECS bus services, and Eudunda Area School advises whether the DECS buses are running or not. A further 40% of students travel to and from school via the St Johns bus (Kapunda/Marrabel bus route) and Keller bus (Robertstown route)

The remaining 10% of students travel to school by private vehicle.





The campus is located in an area of the landscape at very high bushfire risk, and the school site itself is rated as being of very high risk.

Emergency Response Planning: The school has a policy of closure on days of forecast Catastrophic fire danger.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The risk assessment considers likelihood - the chance of a fire igniting and spreading to reach the asset, and consequence - composed of an assessment of bushfire threat (considering fuel hazard, slope and aspect, separation distance between the asset and the nearest vegetation) and vulnerability of the occupants of the asset to bushfire.

Overall Risk Likely

Assessment

Likelihood

Rating

Consequence **Major**

Rating

KEEP UP TO DATE:

- CFS website: cfs.sa.gov.au
- Fire danger ratings: https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/bans_and_ratings.jsp
- Bushfire Information Hotline **1800 362 361**
- For hearing or speech impaired users, phone **1300 555 727** then ask for **1800 362 361**
- For teletype service **TTY 133 677**
- CFS on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

On local [ABC radio](#), [FIVEaa](#), [or one of our other Emergency Broadcast Partners](#)

Created 2005

Reviewed 2020 Michael Bowmer

