

# BUSHFIRE PROCEDURE & ACTION PLAN



## INTRODUCTION

The Farmhouse Montessori School has two campuses in North Balgowlah and North Head, Manly; both are located in areas with a lot of surrounding bushland. It is possible that a bushfire could affect these suburbs. It is therefore necessary to consider risks and required actions that may arise in the event of a bushfire.

**Important: Both campuses will be closed if the Bush Fire Danger Level in suburbs surrounding the campuses is identified as Catastrophic by the Rural Fire Service or NSW Police.**

## PURPOSE

To provide clear guidelines to the educators and other stakeholders to follow the emergency evacuation plan during the bush fire emergencies and ensure their duty of care is carried out as required.

## SCOPE

These guidelines will apply to the Approved provider of Out of School Hours care (Primary Oshcare), nominated supervisor, certified supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents, children and others attending the Farmhouse Montessori School campuses.

## OBJECTIVE

To keep all children and educators safe at all times. Therefore, in the instance of a bush fire, the service will act at all times to protect the educators and children in line with recommendations and instructions from relevant emergency authorities (RFS and NSW Police)

Identified risks during bush fire season

This plan has been formulated with consideration of the following risks of bushfires to staff and children.

- Smoke outside the school may present respiratory problems for some of the children and staff.
- Power may be cut off to a geographic area to assist with firefighting operations. If the school's power was to be cut off we would have no fans or lights.
- Water and sewerage can also be interrupted by a bush fire. Both water pressure and water quality can be affected.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES & PROCEDURES

The aim of this Bushfire Action Plan is to outline the activities that educators, children, families and visitors to be undertaken in the following circumstances:

- On days of a catastrophic fire rating
- On days of very high, severe, extreme fire ratings including Total Fire Bans
- When there is a fire in the local district.
- When a bushfire is threatening or impacting the site.
- During a period of recovery if a bushfire impacts the service.

During peak bush fire seasons, such as Spring and Summer, the Principal and Stage 1 Coordinator will monitor the Fire Danger Rating daily. If the Rating is Very High or above, the Principal and Pre-School Co-ordinator will monitor the situation via the internet, to stay aware of the current situation. The Principal and Stage1 Coordinator will be able to check with the Northern Beaches District NSW Rural Fire Service Office on (02) **9450 3000** at any time. The procedures for each of the above circumstances will be followed according to the steps listed overleaf.

Our staff will follow a "leave early" policy rather than a "stay and defend" policy whenever a bushfire may impact the campuses.

### **Nth Head Primary Campus – Evacuation Process.**

Upon receiving notification from the **RFS, Harbour Trust or NSW Police** that the school and its occupants are in potential danger; the school will follow the following steps.

Unless instructed by Sydney Harbour Trust or the Duty Ranger, The Principal or delegate will call Northern Beaches District NSW Rural Fire Service Office on (02) 9450 3000 and emergency services by calling 000 to seek immediate advice.

If the advice is to **evacuate the building** the staff will follow the emergency bushfire evacuation procedure by following these steps:

1. The Teachers will ask their children to stop what they are doing and make a line at the classroom door. The teacher will pick up the class attendance register (which includes contact details, emergency numbers and information), and a mobile phone, and walk slowly towards the main exit of the school.
2. The children will gather at the main exit where educator 1 will perform a head count using the roll as evidence of how many children are in attendance. Meanwhile educator number 2 will perform a sweep of all rooms (including toilets) to ensure that no children or adults are still present. Once a room has been checked the door will be closed.
3. Once all children are accounted for and the building has been swept, the children will leave the building in an orderly fashion (in pairs) and walk North towards Manly. (see map below)
4. The children will continue to walk under close supervision towards 'Little Manly Beach' where parents will be notified of the event and where and how to collect their children. **\*See Appendix 1**
5. Once children have been collected by their parents, they will be marked on the class roll as not present. Any remaining children will be supervised by staff until parents arrive.

If the advice from the RFS and Police is that it is **too late to leave**, staff will follow the following procedure.

1. The Teachers in the Yani Classroom only, will ask their children to stop what they are doing and make a line at the classroom door, the teacher will pick up the class attendance register (which includes contact details, emergency numbers and information), and a mobile phone, and walk slowly towards the main exit of the school. Students will take their lunch and school bags with them, in case an extended period of occupancy is required.
2. The children will gather at the main exit where educator 1 will perform a head count using the roll as evidence of how many children are in attendance. Meanwhile educator number 2 will perform a sweep of all rooms (including toilets) to ensure that no children or adults are still present. Once a room has been checked the door will be closed.
3. Once all children are accounted for, and the building has been swept, the children will leave the building in an orderly fashion (in pairs) and walk to the East wing (see map below) where the Principal or delegate will monitor the situation closely.
4. The air conditioning will be switched on, all doors will be closed, and the children will have access to water at all times. During this time the Principal or delegate will keep in regular contact by calling the Northern Beaches District NSW Rural Fire Service Office on (02) 9450 3000 to seek advice and updates as to when it is safe to leave the site or inform parents that it is safe to pick up their children.
5. To minimise stress and anxiety to the children, a level of normality will be upheld in which children will continue to work and operate as calmly as possible.
6. As soon as the children are safely located in the East wing of the school the parents will be notified via email and sms using the school communication system.

**When the RFS has indicated it is too late to leave and there is no fire truck present but fire is impacting the school directly, the Principal/coordinator or delegate will:**

- Turn off power and gas (including gas cylinders)
- Take appropriate action e.g. move to shelter-in-place or evacuate the room/s, closing all doors and windows or shelter in the building.
- If sheltering in the building:
  - Move all hoses inside building
  - Close all doors and windows
  - Soak towels and place under external doors
  - Continually patrol property for spot fires and extinguish
  - Move furniture away from windows, and any outdoor furniture away from the building.

### North Balgowlah – Evacuation Procedure

Upon receiving notification from the **RFS, or NSW Police** that the school and its occupants are in potential danger; the school will follow the following steps.

The Principal or delegate will call Northern Beaches District NSW Rural Fire Service Office on (02) 9450 3000 and emergency services by calling 000 to seek immediate advice. If the advice is to **evacuate the building** the staff will follow the emergency bushfire evacuation procedure by following these steps:

1. The Principal or delegate will be notified.
2. The Authorised supervisor will blow a whistle and call a Code Orange. The teachers ask children to stop what they are doing and make a line at the classroom door, collecting their bags on the way. The teacher will pick up the class attendance register (which includes contact details, emergency numbers and information), the school evacuation bag and a mobile phone and walk slowly towards the front door of the school of the school.
3. The children will gather at the main exit where educator 1 will perform a head count using the roll as evidence of how many children are in attendance. Meanwhile educator number 2 will perform a sweep of all rooms (including toilets) to ensure that no children or adults are still present. Once a room has been checked the door will be closed.
4. Once all children are accounted for, and the building has been swept, the children will leave the building in an orderly fashion (in pairs) and either walk across the road to the community centre or walk to the North Balgowlah shops.
5. The children will continue to walk under close supervision. Parents will be notified of the event and where and how to collect their children. **\*See Appendix 2**
6. Once children have been collected by their parents, they will be marked on the class roll as not present. Any remaining children will be supervised by staff until parents arrive.

**When the RFS has indicated it is too late to leave and there is no fire truck present but fire is impacting the school directly, the Principal/coordinator or delegate will:**

- Turn off power and gas (including gas cylinders)
- Take appropriate action e.g. move to shelter-in-place or evacuate the room/s, closing all doors and windows or shelter in the building.
- If sheltering in the building:
  - Move all hoses inside building
  - Close all doors and windows
  - Soak towels and place under external doors
  - Continually patrol property for spot fires and extinguish
  - Move furniture away from windows, and any outdoor furniture away from the building.

#### **1. Recovery after the Front has passed. The Principal will:**

- Ensure that no educators, family members, children or visitors leave the campuses until the situation is considered safe by the emergency services.
- At all times work to keep the staff aware of the situation, including the number of children affected, emergency educator's ratios in place, any issues that arose and if possible the impact to the service.
- Assess the situation and if necessary make arrangements for the care of children for an extended period of time (if the building has been damaged).
- Continue to check the building and surrounds for 2-4 hours after the front has passed.
- Arrange to have fire equipment, warning systems and Evacuation bag, Safety and First Aid Kits checked and made ready for use again.
- Educators at the school will stay on duty until all children have been collected or relief educators arrive.
- Only a qualified educator will administer first aid should the situation arise.
- Relevant educators will undertake a debriefing of the fire emergency and the procedures undertaken. Educators will be requested to review their own roles, responsibilities and preparation before and during the crisis. The policy will be reviewed to ascertain its effectiveness.
- If necessary, the Board and the Principal will arrange for relevant authorities to check the safety of the site.
- For the North Balgowlah campus, ACEQUA will be notified.

**As ongoing precautions and risk management, The Principal & Pre-School Co-ordinator/ will always ensure that:**

- To minimize the impact of smoky conditions all doors and windows are to be kept closed during the bushfire season.

- Most staff members to carry a mobile phone in order to have telephone access to emergency services, parents if landline telephone services are interrupted.
- All gates have access keys and ensure the locks are in working order.
- All outdoor taps are in working order with hoses attached if possible.
- All hazards are removed from passages and walkways and nothing is blocking emergency exits.
- All educators will monitor conditions when outside. Educators will also ensure that no art and craft work, posters etc are hung outside and that garbage bins are emptied throughout the day.
- Educators will ensure a first aid Kit is easily accessible and a mobile phone which is in full working order. The Emergency Contact register, Daily Roll and the medical register for the day will also be accessible within the kit.
- Family members will be required to provide a contact phone number to the school upon enrolment and any children suffering from asthma or having breathing difficulties have an asthma action plan available at all times.

**The Principal or authorized supervisor will continuously monitor fire hazards and emergency warnings in the areas surrounding both campuses and the following actions will take place depending of the severity of danger as advised by the RFS and NSW Police.**

## **2. Catastrophic Fire Danger when Fire is Reported in the Local District**

**Both campuses will be closed if the Bush Fire Danger Level is Catastrophic as notified by the RFS**

- The Farmhouse Montessori School campuses at both Nth Head (Manly) and Nth Balgowlah will be closed on these days.
- Fire danger levels will be continuously monitored by the School leadership team and parents warned as soon as the decision is made to close the school. (usually the day prior)
- This information will be communicated to all parents through emails, mobile phones and via social media by the Principal.

## **3. Very High, Severe or Extreme Fire Danger Ratings including Total Fire Bans and when Fire is Reported in the Local District**

- During days of very high, extreme or severe fire danger levels, the Principal and Stage 1 Coordinator will actively monitor the fire danger level and update staff, parents and the wider community upon acknowledgement of these changes or updates. During severe fire warnings all excursions and external staff training will be cancelled and rescheduled.

## **4. Fire Reported in Local District**

In addition to the steps outlined in the previous section of the policy:

- The Principal will contact educators that may be impacted by the fire to discuss the situation and ensure all preparation activities have been undertaken. They will also ensure there is a current evacuation plan in place that can be implemented after contacting the RFS headquarters via telephone for advice.
- All children's activities outside the building will be cancelled.
- The Principal at North Head and the Pre-School coordinator will co-ordinate:
  - Turning off any gas cylinders
  - Backing up all computer files if applicable and if time allows.
  - Ensure that whistles and or alarms are in place and are working so they can be used to notify everyone if a fire starts on site.
  - Each portable fire extinguisher has been regularly checked by inspectors.

## GENERAL INFORMATION AND WEBSITES OF INTEREST

### Know the Bush Fire Alert Levels

If there is a fire in your area you will find its alert level on the NSW RFS website, on the radio and in the 'Fires Near Me' app.

You need to keep track of the alert level so you know what you should do. Please see Icon below



Bush

Fire-Plan-Step3-Know

### Keep Key Information

In a bush fire, it's important that you stay up to date on conditions in your area. The NSW Rural Fire Service strongly advises saving these numbers, links and apps now. Please see Icon below



Bush

Fire-Plan-Step4-Keep

## RFS-WEBSITE INFORMATION

### Where to get Bush Fire Information

A Guide to Bush Fire Emergency Management and Evacuation Plan

[http://www://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/29270/Form.pdf](http://www://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/29270/Form.pdf)

### Bush Fire Survival Plan

<http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/bush-fire-survival-plan>

### Planning & Preparing for Bush Fires

<http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare>

### Fires Near Me

Websites, Smartphones App, NSW RFS Social Media

<https://www/rfs/nsw/gov.au/news-and-media/stay-up-to-date>

### Bush Fire Information Line

Phone number-1800 679 737

### NSW Rural Fire Service- Northern Beaches District Office

Phone Number-9450 3000.

## LEGISLATIVE LINKS & SOURCES

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 108  
National Quality Standard – 2.3.3  
Workplace Health and Safety Act 2012  
Children's Health and Wellbeing Act 2009  
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005  
Health and Safety Act 2004  
Rural Fire Service

## LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

Emergency Management-Evacuation  
Lockdown and Lockout Procedures  
Security

## MODIFICATIONS

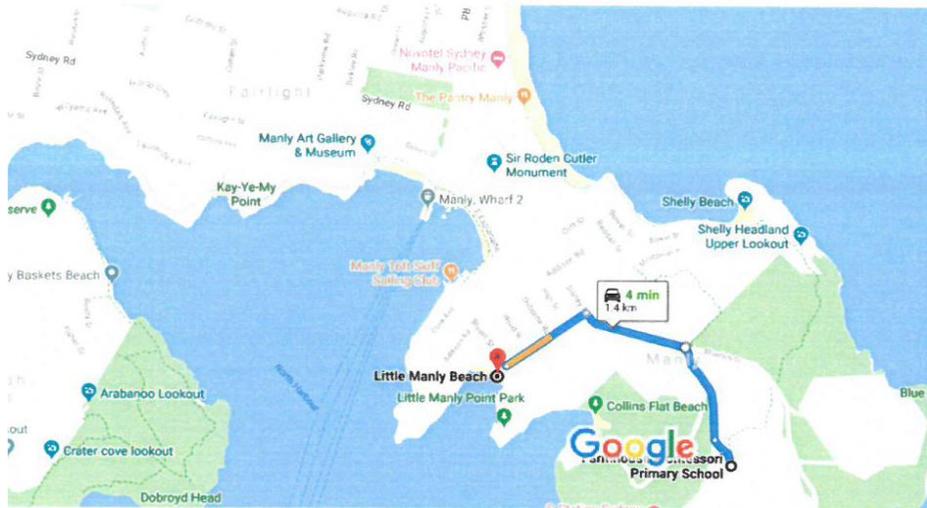
No change  
Nth Head Information Added  
No change  
New Logo added  
No Changes  
Catastrophic Fire Warning and school closure sections

## REVIEW DATE

May 2009  
August 2011  
March 2014,  
May 2015  
Sept 2018  
Dec 2019

**APPENDIX 1**

Map of route to Little Manly Beach from North Head Campus



Map data ©

**Farmhouse Montessori Primary School**

6/33 N Head Scenic Dr, Manly NSW 2095

- ↑ 1. Head north towards N Head Scenic Dr  
⚠ Partial restricted-usage road  
140 m
- ↗ 2. Turn right onto N Head Scenic Dr  
400 m
- ↑ 3. Continue onto Darley Rd  
450 m
- ↖ 4. Turn left onto Marshall St  
400 m
- ↘ 5. Turn right onto Stuart St  
i Destination will be on the left  
6 m

Updated January 4, 2020.

## APPENDIX 2

**BUILDING**  
**CHECKED**  
**ALL CLEAR**

*Checked by Principal/Authorised  
Supervisor  
Farmhouse Montessori School*

*In the event of an evacuation of the building, after checking to ensure that all persons have evacuated this building, the last person leaving the building should place this card on the exterior door.  
This will assist administration and emergency services in expediting the search of the building*

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