

FIRE CODE RED BUSES POLICY

Rationale

Whittlesea Secondary College (WSC) is committed to ensuring that our school community is as prepared as possible for the bushfire season. The safety of our students and staff is paramount.

Aims

- to ensure the safety of the College students travelling by bus on Country Fire Authority (CFA) or other authority designated Fire Code Red days.

Implementation

State-wide Response

- Every school (government and non-government), and children's service has been asked to review its emergency management plan and address any priority maintenance works.

School Closures

- Whittlesea Secondary College has been part of an audit process designed to assess the site's fire risk. The audit has assessed the Whittlesea Secondary College site as being low risk.
 - Consequently, the site has not been placed on the Bushfire At-Risk Register and so Whittlesea Secondary College will not automatically close on a Code Red Day.
- Schools that have been identified as being at high risk will now close on a day declared a Code Red Fire Danger Rating Day within the relevant Bureau of Meteorology district.
 - Whittlesea Secondary College is located in the Central district.

School Bus Services

- Bus routes passing through at-risk areas or routes operated by schools in at-risk locations will be closed on high-risk fire days.
- The impact on the school bus routes servicing Whittlesea Secondary College, Whittlesea Primary School and St. Mary's Primary School will be as follows:
 - On a Code Red Day, NO school buses will run through a Code Red district.
- On days other than Code Red, school buses will not run if it is likely the route passes into, or through, a high risk area due to a going fire, therefore the complete route will be cancelled.

Communication

- Whittlesea Secondary College has been working closely with our local primary schools and Department of Education and Training (DET) representatives in order to develop a number of ways families can access information relating to Code Red or localised emergency events.
- We are developing 'four ways' for members of our community to access information relating to school and bus service closure. This information system will be used for Code Red Days and for responses to localised emergencies.
 - School Notice: In circumstances where there is adequate time to notify families prior to an event (such as Code Red Day), students will be issued with a notice to take home to their family outlining arrangements for that day.
 - Email: The school has a set up an email group which will allow the school to contact families with a short message with up to date information.
 - Website: The school's website www.whittleseasc.vic.edu.au will carry relevant information that families can access.

- SMS Messaging: The school has set up an emergency SMS service all families are registered automatically if they supply a mobile phone number. Messages will only be sent in the event of an emergency or to alert families of a change to normal school operations.
- Please note that with some of these 'ways of communication' the school needs to have current information s to mobile phone numbers and email addresses.
- Parents/carers are asked to ensure contact details held at the main office are correct and up-to-date.

Further information

- The Department of Education and Training (DET) has set up a website with comprehensive information and answers to frequently asked questions it can be found at [DET Bushfires At-Risk Register](#)
- Alternatively, parents/carers can refer to the College Incident Management Policy and/or contact the College on 9719 1200.

Related Legislation and Policies

- [DET Bushfires At-Risk Register](#)
- WSC Incident Management Policy

Appendices

Evaluation

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

This Policy was last ratified by School Council in: 2017