



## TORRENS VALLEY CHILDREN'S CENTRE INC.

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### **BUSHFIRE RESPONSE PLAN (2022/23)**

The BRP outlines required action to

- Prepare the site before the bushfire season
- Manage Catastrophic Rated Fire Danger days
- Manage Total Fire Ban days
- Manage different levels of a bushfire emergency

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

- The Bushfire Response Plan, to be referred to hereafter as BRP, is to be reviewed annually during October each year to reflect any changes that may have taken place at a site level and /or to reflect any advice or requirements from CFS or Department for Education, to be referred to hereafter as DfEd.
- A copy of the BRP will be forwarded to the Gumeracha CFS and CFS regional office in Roseworthy and all families prior to the commencement of the Bushfire Season.

#### **Definitions:**

**The Security and Emergency Management Unit (SEM):** Department for Education unit responsible for sites security & emergency management.

**Onsite Shelter in Place** – an emergency response to an evident or suspected external threat or danger that involves the use of a building or part of a building and it's indoor atmosphere to shield occupants from the threat or danger, without the need to physically secure rooms or buildings.: In the event of the need to enact a ***Shelter in Place*** the main centre building is nominated as the **Shelter in Place Refuge**

**Offsite evacuation:** - an emergency response that involves moving offsite. The CFS has declared the Gumeracha Oval is the nominated ***Last Resort Refuge for members of the Gumeracha community. We will only evacuate off site if directed to do so by emergency services.***

**Local district:** - The nearby townships and areas surrounding Gumeracha, Cudlee Creek/Millbrook, Kenton Valley, Kersbrook, Forreston & Birdwood

#### **PREPARING THE TORRENS VALLEY CHILDREN'S CENTRE FOR THE COMING BUSHFIRE SEASON.**

An Incident Response Team (IRT) has been established and members are instructed on their roles and responsibilities outlined in the BRP. During school holidays the Child Care staff become the IRT Response Team. The IRT members are:

- The Centre Director - Jayne Cook or delegate
- The Assistant Director (Child Care) – Sue Melville-Smith or the pm nominated Responsible Person
- The Front Office Administration Officer – Gayle Reavey
- The Firewarden – Tracey Bradley
- The Kindy Teacher – Maria Barber or delegate
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#### **IRT responsibilities:**

- Provide all staff, regular visitors and families with pre fire season updates as required and instruction about any changes to the contents and requirements of the site BRP during Term 4 and Term 1.
- Monitor CFS website, email alerts and have local radio station playing on days of high bushfire danger and pass on relevant messages to the Preschool Director/Assistant Director
- Children's/staff essential medications and plans are in emergency backpacks at all times.
- Ensure supplies of clean, long life drinking water & food stuffs will be purchased (for 50 children) for both Kindy and Child Care rooms.
- Ensure each room has a supply of stored towels/blankets.

- Ensure emergency practice drills are carried out by all children and all staff across the centre during the first 2 weeks of Term 4 and Term 1 each year (a whole site emergency drill). The Fire Warden will ensure that emergency drills are carried out by each program (Child Care & Kindy) at least once per term/by each staff member/by attendance group also.
- Ensure overhanging tree branches have been trimmed away from building rooflines and regular gutter cleaning occurs.  
Site inspection is carried out early in term 4 each year & vegetation maintenance will occur as needed
- Ensure audible warning devices are ready for use and operating correctly
- **Understand TRIGGER POINTS for enacting a Shelter in Place procedure.**

### **MANAGEMENT OF CATASTROPHIC FIRE DANGER RATING DAYS:**

On catastrophic fire danger days in the Mount Lofty Ranges fire ban district, our centre will **CLOSE** and no one is permitted on site. Whilst our bushfire centre's risk rating is R3 (medium to low risk), we are in proximity to a nearby R1 or R2 (extreme to very high risk) school.

All families will be notified of the CENTRE closure via our SMS system after the declaration at 4.00pm the day before. It is therefore important that nominated contact details are kept up to date – on nominated mobile number as per enrolment form.

If the Fire danger rating is elevated to catastrophic on the day, our centre operates as normal unless otherwise directed by the SEM or an authorised representative of the emergency services.

### **MANAGEMENT OF TOTAL FIRE BAN DAYS**

- Assistant Director will inform staff, families and children that a day of Total Fire Ban has been declared. "Total Fire Ban" signs will be displayed on the large notice board and/or on the front door.
- The nominated staff members will monitor CFS website and email alert for CFS information and warning messages.
- Children's excursions away from the site may be cancelled for the day and rescheduled by Director/Assistant Director – a risk assessment will be conducted
- Off-site meetings for staff may be cancelled – a risk assessment will be conducted by the Director/Assistant Director
- The keys for external locked gates & building (master key) will be attached to the emergency evacuation kits & worn on lanyards by members of the IRT
- All café blinds attached to the veranda are to be rolled up.
- Outside staff members will monitor weather conditions and report any concerns to the Director or Assistant Director.
- All Incident Response Team members (and other staff if desired) to carry mobile phones (centre & and/or private) on person at all times. Staff to ensure their phones are in working order and batteries fully charged.
- Ensure children's water bottles and other water containers are regularly topped up during the day

### **MANAGEMENT OF A BUSHFIRE EMERGENCY- ENACTING Bushfire Response Plan**

We will enact our Bushfire Response Procedure as appropriate to the proximity and severity of the fire.

The SEM unit will provide direction and assistance on being made aware of any fire which threatens to impact on departmental sites subject to the following criteria:

- An 'emergency' warning message being issued by the CFS for a fire within 25km of site or service
- A 'watch and act' or 'emergency warning' message being issued by the CFS for a fire within 5km of our site.

### **FIRE REPORTED IN LOCAL DISTRICT – Not impacting on site**

When a bushfire has been reported in the nominated local district the IRT will be activated and advise staff and families accordingly. The IRT responsibilities are to ensure:

- ✚ Emergency contacts, daily attendance sheets, first aid log folders to be packed into emergency bags.
- ✚ Additional portable water containers will be filled to ensure adequate water supplies are available.
- ✚ Identify/document all children who live in the area that is reported to be affected by the fire – Keep sign in sheets up to date re; any children who are collected from the centre during the day.

- + Preparation of the main centre building as the Last Resort Refuge e.g., close any blinds and windows, wet towels, ready fire extinguishers, prepare drinks etc.
- + All room Responsible Persons encourage children to organise personal belongings in lockers. All children and staff will put shoes on. All staff and children are expected to have appropriate, enclosed shoes on site.
- + Children are encouraged to top up personal water bottles during the day.

The Front Office Admin/finance officer - Monday to Wednesday 9.00am – 3.00pm (Director/Assistant Director/CC pm Responsible Person at other times) will:

- Back up site computer records – only if possible to do so
- Alert visitors and volunteers of the situation and advise them of action to take.
- Notify all families of the situation via SMS message system. Families will be asked to arrange for collection of children asap where safe to do so.

## **FIRE EVENT IMPACTING ON SITE**

**TRIGGERS FOR SHELTER IN PLACE** – the IRT must wait for direction prior to enacting a **Shelter in Place** procedure, in response to an active bushfire threat, but must inform the SEM unit via 1800 000 279 at earliest, safe opportunity.

+ **CFS information & warning messages (website and email alert)**

+ **Advice from SEM unit**

+ **The local emergency Services advise directly that a bushfire is likely to impact on the site**

+ **There is a confirmed sighting of nearby smoke or flame**

## **PROCEDURES FOR SHELTER IN PLACE**

**Please note: Once *Shelter in Place* is enacted no persons can enter or exit the centre building until it is deemed safe to do so by the IRT, in conjunction with Emergency Services and DfED.**

- When a trigger is reached alarms will sound continuously by Fire Warden and/or Kindy and /Child Care responsible person until all staff are aware and **shelter in place** procedures have been instigated – moving to mat areas in Kindy & Child Care rooms where a roll call of ALL children & staff on site will be conducted.
- Room Responsible Persons will check that taps are working and fill available containers with water.
- Front Office administration officer (when on duty) will monitor visitors and volunteers. When not on duty, this responsibility falls to the Responsible Person.

### **The IRT WILL:**

- Ensure ALL persons in the Shelter in Place Refuge are prepared for the arrival and passage of the fire front
- Ensure all persons are located away from windows and unnecessary movement is limited.
- Ensure TVCC emergency vests are worn by all staff and TVCC identification arm bands are paced on all children
- Provide regular updates at an appropriate level to children and adults.
- Assist all children and adults to remain calm.
- Communicate procedure has been enacted with families via SMS system.
- Outline possible plans of actions after the front has passed.
- Maintain attendance collection records – children may be collected from this location when it is safe for families'/emergency contacts to do so. If children need to be collected by persons who are not nominated as an "authority to collect/emergency contacts" – parents MUST notify us of this (using the mobile contacts provided in sms message) prior to us releasing the child/ren.

## **RECOVERY AFTER THE FRONT HAS PASSED**

The Director/Assistant Director/Responsible Person will ensure no one leaves the Shelter in Place Refuge until the situation outside has been assessed as safe by members of the IRT or members of the Emergency Services. This means that children cannot be collected during Shelter in Place.

The IRT will:

- Take advice from emergency services as to determination of need to evacuate the Bushfire Ready Building and move to an alternative safe location if required.

- Make an assessment of the need for, and if necessary, begin preparations to care for children for an extended period of time – in conjunction with emergency services if possible.
- Ensure nominated staff members remain on duty until all children are collected from the site by parents/carers/collection authorised collectors. Drinking water, snacks, blankets etc. will be made available to children whilst awaiting collection
- Inform and liaise with Education Director and/or Security, Bushfire and Emergency Management team as required
- Ensure parents are informed via SMS communication system.
- Ensure sign in/out sheets will be completed for all children who are collected from both child care and kindy.
- Ensure NQS child/adult ratios MUST be met at all times. There must be at least 2 staff members on site until the last child goes home.

The Director/Assistant Director/Responsible Person will

- Liaise with Emergency Services on site as soon as possible.
- Arrange to have the appropriate authorities assess the safety of the site buildings once the area has been declared safe
- Assist staff in checking for and treatment of any injuries.

### **FOLLOW UP FROM SHELTER IN PLACE**

- Conduct a debrief with all staff and children (where appropriate).
- Review the effectiveness of staff instruction undertaken before the bush fire emergency in light of the experience
- Complete the IRMS Report (Director/Assistant Director)
- Refer media enquiries to Education Director or DfEd Media Unit
- WHS rep/Fire Warden will ensure Emergency Supplies kits are replenished asap.

### **PROCEDURES IF OFF-SITE EVACUATION IS REQUIRED – only if directed & facilitated by emergency services**

The IRT will:

- Ensure Building Evacuation procedures are followed
- Ensure ALL staff/visitors and children are accounted for and assembled at outside evacuation point/s
- Ensure ALL staff and children move to Gumeracha Institute and Oval as directed by emergency services

ON arrival at the Gumeracha Oval the IRT will:

- ENSURE that all staff and children are accounted for (a roll call will be conducted).
- Make an assessment of the need for, and if necessary, begin preparations to care for children for an extended period of time.
- Notify appropriate contacts (parents, caregivers etc.) of incident and action taken via SMS communication system.
- Maintain attendance collection records – children may be collected from this location when it is safe for families'/emergency contacts to do so. If children need to be collected by persons who are not nominated as an "authority to collect/emergency contacts" – parents MUST notify us of this (using the mobile contacts provided in sms message) prior to us releasing the child/ren.
- Ensure nominated staff members remain on duty until all children are collected from the evacuation site by parents'/care givers/authorised collectors. NQS staff: child ratios MUST be met at all times. There must be at least 2 trained staff members with children until all have been collected.
- Liaise with Emergency Services and follow advice
- Assist all children and adults to remain calm
- Treat any first aid as required
- Inform and liaise with Education Director and/or DfEd Security, Bushfire & Emergency Management team of incident.

### **FOLLOW UP FROM OFF-SITE EVACUATION**

The IRT will

- Complete IRMS report (Director or Assistant Director)

- Contact Educational Director (Director or Assistant Director) to discuss requirements for additional support including psychological first aid
- Conduct a debrief with all staff and children (where appropriate)
- Review emergency management plans/procedures and modify where required
- Refer media enquiries to Education Director or DfED Media *Unit*

WHS rep/Fire Warden will replenish Emergency supply kits.

**Sources:**

Department for Education Bushfire Preparation & Response Procedures (cessed Oct 2022)  
Security & Emergency Management Unit (SEM) input (Accessed Oct 2022)

Updated October 2022