

Student Care, Safety and Welfare: Bushfire Safety Policy and Procedure- Hastings Campus

The Hastings Campus of Advance College of Education (ACE) is listed on the Department of Education and Training's (DET) Bushfire at Risk Register (BARR) and is required to have procedures in place to ensure the safety of staff, students and others at the Campus.

In the event of any threat of approaching bushfire, the entire College will evacuate immediately upon notice from the Principal, or delegate, to the roadside edge of the car park and remain there until approved to leave.

Advance College (Hastings Campus) will close on days declared catastrophic

Purpose:

The incidence of bushfire in Victoria highlights the need for our College to be thoroughly prepared. The College's *Emergency Management Plan* (EMP) addresses the risk and procedure for dealing with Bushfire Emergencies, and is informed by the DET's Bushfire Checklist. This checklist covers:

- arrangements for the safety and welfare of staff and students, including relocation to pre-arranged sites or rendezvous points;
- readiness levels and "trigger points" for decisions regarding school closure;
- monitoring fire risks and activity on high-risk or total fire ban days;
- notification arrangements to emergency services;
- accessing support, including transportation (e.g. buses) at short notice, in line with "stay or go" planning strategies;
- communications plan and contact lists (including school community, local government and emergency services); and
- roles and responsibilities of school personnel in executing emergency plans.

Aim:

This policy is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the 'Whole School Community' during incidents of bushfire or potential bushfire.

Implementation:

Where possible, up to 3 days' notice of a planned closure will be provided, should the College be required to close due to a catastrophic day. Parents and carers should, however, expect that in some instances fewer than 3 days' notice may be provided.

The final decision to close should be confirmed by 12 noon the day prior. This decision will not change and cannot change – regardless of any changes in the weather forecast.

When the College is closed for bushfire, NO staff or members of the college community will remain on-site OR are permitted on site during a closure.

The Principal will review the timing arrangements for the release of students on days of extreme fire danger, including their movement at the end of the school day, when fire risk is generally higher.

Parents will be notified by a text message with a copy of this document, at the start of Term 4 and again at the beginning of the school year about these arrangements. Communicating emergency information to parents will be done via text to mobile phones.

Use of Public Transport:

Public bus routes passing through high-risk areas or routes in high-risk locations will be closed on high-risk fire days.

A bus route will be closed if it has to pass through an area affected by fire even if the associated school is not affected by fire and remains open.

If a bus route is threatened by unexpected fire, ACE will enact its EMP.

Information on any changes to bus routes or cancellation of services will be provided by ACE to parents as soon as is possible and practicable.

Off-site Activities:

The safety of students and staff is paramount and off-site activities may be cancelled, postponed or relocated if faced with the threat of bushfire.

Off-site activities include any activity undertaken by staff and/or students away from the Hastings campus. This can include camps, field trips/excursions, sporting activities, training or conferences for staff.

As the Hastings Campus is in a fire-prone area, ACE will consider the appropriateness of activities undertaken on days of extreme weather as well as days of total fire ban. Options could include cancelling, postponing or relocating the activity if extreme weather or fire conditions are forecast. Such decisions will be made as early as possible to ensure the ongoing safety of staff and students. Senior staff will be responsible for making this decision and informing those concerned/affected.

All staff are required to ensure that information about their activity (e.g. camp or excursions) has been provided to the Principal as per the *Camps and Excursions Policy*.

Liaisons:

ACE will provide local government agencies with a copy of their plan to facilitate overall co-ordination in the event of a bushfire and ensure the EMP is integrated into local emergency arrangements. Staff, students and parents shall be informed about, and understand the school arrangements in advance of any fire emergency.

The Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU) liaises with fire authorities to monitor major fire activity throughout the fire danger period, and communicates directly with schools that may be affected. The ESMU should be contacted ASAP regardless in the event of a threat of approaching bushfire.

Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if required due to legislative, regulatory or operational changes.

The principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and maintained.

Approval:

Policy last reviewed	22 nd April 2026
Consultation	College Board 22 nd April 2026
Approved by	College Board and (Principal)
Next review date	21 st April 2029