Education
Building Disaster Resilience in Young People

Bushfire Patrol

Teachers' Guide - PP to Year 3

Building Disaster Resilience in Young People

Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Fire & Emergency Services**

DFES
Department of Fire & Emergency Services

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About This Program

Bushfire Patrol was developed for teachers to use in classrooms across the Western Australia (WA) Southwest Land Division (see Figure 1) and is suitable for primary school students from Geraldton through to Esperance. *North West Bushfire Patrol* is a similar resource, for schools in the North West of Western Australia.

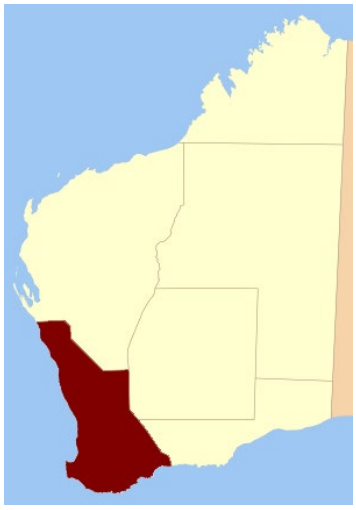

Figure 1 *South West Land Division*

The intended outcome of *Bushfire Patrol* is to raise students' awareness safe and unsafe behaviours around fire, as well as developing personal behaviours and strategies to keep themselves safe if there is a bushfire. The resource takes Western Australia's diverse population into consideration and is suitable for use in both urban and regional schools.

Globally, human risk from disaster is on the rise and children are amongst groups of people most vulnerable to disasters[1]. The impact of a bushfire disaster can be significantly reduced if affected communities are well prepared and equipped with the knowledge and skills of how to respond when a bushfire occurs.

Adding 'disaster' to your schools' resilience education program

Children and young people are recognised as a vulnerable group in a world in which we are experiencing a global increase in disasters[2]. The 2021 Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI)[3] indicates that almost every child on Earth is exposed to at least one climate and environmental hazard, such as bushfires, heatwaves, cyclones, severe storms, earthquake and or tsunami.

Bushfire Patrol is a Disaster Resilience Education (DRE)[4] program aiming to provide opportunities for children from Pre-Primary up to participate in their own bushfire preparedness, at school and at home. A national survey[5] of children and young people in 2020 found that those surveyed felt they had learnt more about earthquakes in school than the natural hazards that present the most risk to them, that is, bushfire and flood. Children and young people surveyed wanted to know more about the actions they could take to be

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[1] UNESCO & UNICEF. 2014. *Towards a Learning Culture of Safety and Resilience: Technical guidance for integrating disaster risk reduction in the school curriculum.* New York: UNESCO

[2] UNESCO & UNICEF, 2014. *Towards a Learning Culture of Safety and Resilience: Technical guidance for integrating disaster risk reduction in the school curriculum.* New York: UNESCO

[3] UNICEF, 2021. The climate crisis is a child rights crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index.

[4] Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR, 2021). Disaster Resilience Education for Young People Handbook https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/media/8874/aidr-handbook_dreyp_2021.pdf

[5] Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR, 2020). *Our World Our Say: National survey of children and young people on climate change and disaster risk.*

better prepared for bushfire and flood; and to be able to look after themselves, others and animals.

Bushfire education traditionally fits the Human and Social Science (HASS) curriculum in upper primary school, however, bushfire education is relevant to students in early childhood as part of your school's resilience education program within Health and Physical Education (HPE), as well as HASS, with its focus on 'place'.

From early childhood to adolescence, children learn about safe and unsafe behaviours and who can help them in an emergency; what strategies they can implement to keep themselves safe in different situations, and, put new skills into practice. As they become older, they examine how to respond when peers are encouraging them to take unnecessary risks; and collaborate with their classmates to come up with strategies they can use in emergencies or when they feel unsafe.

All these things form part of bushfire education and are included in Disaster Resilience Education (DRE) programs such as *Bushfire Patrol*.

Links between home, school, and community

Research into children and young people's experience of bushfire across Australia shows that the impacts of a bushfire disaster can be significantly reduced if communities are well prepared and equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond before and when a bushfire occurs.

> *'This isn't just for young people, but I think they need to know the fire plans. Because there were a lot of people who did not have a fire plan and were just panicking.'*
>
> (NSW Children & Young People's Experience of Disaster Report, 2020)

The NSW *Children & Young People's Experience of Disaster* report (2020)[6] found that children want to be involved in bushfire planning and want to know that their parents, carers, and school are well prepared and can remain calm in a bushfire emergency.

Adults (at school and at home) can provide opportunities for children to be involved in bushfire planning from as young as five or six years of age. Meaningful activities can include participating in bushfire drills and putting together their own personal 'grab bag'. As they age and have a greater chance to contribute to bushfire planning and executing the plan, they are less likely to be anxious and more likely to be prepared for a bushfire emergency.

Bushfire Patrol provides a link between your school's bushfire risk management plan, your students' own family bushfire plans and uses a whole of school / community approach to help build disaster resilience across all years of schooling.

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[6] Office of the Advocate for Children & Young People (NSW, 2020). *Children & Young People's Experience of Disaster*.

DFES encourages all households in Bushfire Prone Areas to have a Bushfire Survival Plan. A plan will help families make important decisions like, when to go, which way to travel, where to go and what to take. A Bushfire Survival Plan gives families the best chance of surviving a bushfire. It is important to highlight that leaving early is always the safest option.

There is no activity in the PP-Year 3 learning program for students to complete a Family Bushfire Survival Plan, although students can put together an Emergency Grab Bag in Module Five.

To extend students in Years 3, look at *Bushfire Patrol* (Years 4-6), Modules Four and Five and access the **My Family's Bushfire Survival Plan** worksheet. N.B. Some parents or guardians are unwilling or unable to participate in this activity. If so, an alternative is to encourage students to have a bushfire chat with other classroom students to decide the following:

- When will they know to leave their home?
- Where will they go?
- Which way will they go?

Visit mybushfireplan.wa.gov.au – *My Bushfire Plan* is the main online tool used in Western Australia for people to create a Bushfire Plan. A link to *My Bushfire Plan* is provided in the *Parent Information Sheet* found in the Appendix.

Children and young people's experience with fire

Each of your students will have different experiences with fire. Some may be confident in lighting fires for cooking and heating purposes when camping or at home; and others will have little to no fire knowledge or skills. It helps to find out if any of your students have experienced the impact of bushfire as they could find this topic distressing.

Children with a fascination for Fire

Bushfire Patrol Pre-Primary to Year 3 does not include activities where teachers or visitors light a fire or demonstrate flame. The program focuses on fire safety without providing opportunities for children to increase their natural curiosity for fire or flames.

Some children and young people are fascinated by fire and either light unsafe fires or endanger themselves by getting close to fire. The DFES Juvenile & Family Fire Awareness (JAFFA) Program is available to support these children (aged 6-16) and their families.

The program is delivered in the family home by JAFFA-trained firefighters. JAFFA includes an interview with the parent(s) and child, as well as a personalised education session that helps the young person understand the consequences of playing with fire. JAFFA receives referrals from schools, parents/carers, WA Police and Juvenile Justice. Contact JAFFA on 9395 9488; email jaffa@dfes.wa.gov.au or visit www.dfes.wa.gov.au/jaffa to find out more.

Bushfire Patrol Learning Outcomes

This program reflects an inquiry approach to learning where students direct their learning and apply it to their own location.

Key outcomes include:

- Identifying safe and unsafe behaviour with fire
- Understanding that fire is a tool for responsible adults (who hold the knowledge and skills to use it)
- Identifying there are unsafe times to light fires (thus increasing risk)
- Developing personal behaviours and strategies for staying safe when there is a bushfire
- Understanding how to respond to a bushfire

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Outcomes

Disaster Risk Reduction Education is about building students' understanding of the causes, nature and effects of hazards while also developing a range of skills to help prevent and lessen the impact of a disaster.

The intended disaster risk reduction outcomes for Pre-Primary to Year 3 are*:*

1. Students do not light fires unsupervised
2. Students do not play with lighters and matches
3. Students tell adults immediately if they see lighters/matches in the reach of children
4. Students seek help from an adult when there is an unsafe fire, even when they took part in lighting the fire
5. Students know to call Triple Zero when there is an unsafe fire
6. Students seek help from an adult when they see others being unsafe with fire
7. Students are able to inform others of how weather can increase bushfire danger and create unsafe fire conditions
8. Students have an Emergency Grab Bag and are ready to leave early in a bushfire emergency

Structure of each module

Module: Title of Module
Subtitle

About this lesson
- Overview of the lesson

Background information
- Information needed to teach the lesson or complete activities
- May include links to online content, including images and video

Key messages
- Key messages featured in the module

Learning outcomes
- Student learning outcomes

Things you will need
- What you will need to gather or organise for students to complete all of the module

Activity #:
- Each module contains a number of activities

Extension:
- Opportunities for students to apply the information further or extend their knowledge and understanding

In the community:
Opportunities for students to engage with their school community, home or local community and demonstrate what they have learned.

Whole of School and Community Approach

Research conducted around child-centred disaster risk reduction has repeatedly shown that multi-component whole-school initiatives involving the whole school community are more likely to increase disaster resilience outcomes than single one-off learning activities done in isolation.

A whole school approach includes all members of a school community, including teaching and non-teaching members of staff, parents and guardians, all students and the wider community. This approach provides students with interactive and engaging learning activities,

ensuring all school staff and students are part of the learning process, building positive and respectful partnerships with families and the wider community.

Within the modules and activities you will find suggestions that help build a whole of school and community approach:

- Ways to help guide children to talk with parents about what they have learnt
- Ideas on how students can engage the wider community during the learning process
- Child-parent interactive homework suggestions
- Activities which use the 'kids teaching kids' model so that those students learning about bushfires can teach other students
- Ideas on how to have direct engagement with local emergency management staff

To encourage household and family involvement in the learning program, you will find a *Parent Information Sheet* in the Appendix, which we encourage you to send home to parents and carers at the commencement of the learning process.

Enriching the program (inviting guests and other options):

Inviting guests into the classroom is a great opportunity for students to find out more about the different helpers in their community. Students can gain a better understanding about local bushfire risks in their community; cultural and planned burning practices; environmental risks to plants, animals, and the places they love; risks to homes, other buildings, and infrastructure; and are able to share their own bushfire knowledge and skills.

When inviting guests, communicate clearly with them before they visit to ensure they understand what you require and what they can expect.

Guests can include:

- Local volunteer fire brigade - visit http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/contactus to find your local Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service or local Bushfire Brigade.
- Local Aboriginal Elders to provide information about bushfire and the seasons, including traditional burning practices and importance of Country.
- Parks and Wildlife volunteers to discuss impact of bushfire on native animals and habitats. (Visit the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions).
- Staff and parents who can share their own bushfire experiences and bushfire plans.

Other ways to further enrich the program include:

- A whole of school bushfire drill
- Extension activities where students plan their own investigation and present their findings to their class (or other audience), or as a learning journey activity.

N.B. Career firefighters[7] from the Fire and Rescue Service are unlikely to visit classes as part of this program. They run a Year 3 Home Fire Safety incursion, which is available to all Year 3 classes in metropolitan areas within WA, which have a career fire service.

[7] Career fire stations serve most of the Perth metropolitan area including Mandurah and Rockingham and the regional centres of Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Bunbury and Albany.

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

DFES Department of Fire & Emergency Services

FOR A SAFER STATE

Parent/Carer Information Sheet – FAMILY BUSHFIRE PLAN

Dear Parent/Carer

Students are learning about bushfire, using a Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) resource, *Bushfire Patrol*. Please talk to your child about what they are learning:

- Matches and lighters should be stored up high, away from children (possibly in a locked cupboard or drawer) – check where your matches are stored and store them appropriately
- Fire is a tool for adults to use – speak to them about how you use fire as a 'tool'
- Small fires can become large fires very quickly
- Tell an adult if they see or smell smoke or fire and when adults should call 000
- What to include in their emergency 'grab bag' at the start of each bushfire season

We are asking you to:

- **Complete a bushfire plan with child / children (15 minutes).**

If you already have a bushfire plan, please go through it with your child. You could also make an emergency kit together and place it by your front door.

How to make a bushfire plan

Visit mybushfireplan.wa.gov.au or download the ***My Bushfire Plan*** App.

- The best plan is one that everyone in your household knows what to do if there is a bushfire
- Practising your bushfire plan increases each of your family members' safety before and during the bushfire season.

Where to find accurate bushfire information

- Find Bushfire Alerts and Warnings, the Australian Fire Danger Rating System and information about Total Fire Bans at Emergency WA emergency.wa.gov.au.

Kind regards

Additional Resources and Useful Web Links

Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)	dfes.wa.gov.au
Department of Fire and Emergenc Services (DFES)	www.dfes.wa.gov.au
DFES Alerts and Warnings	www.emergency.wa.gov.au
DFES Fire Danger Warnings (Emergency WA)	
DFES Bushfire Publications	www.dfes.wa.gov.au/safetyinformation/fire/bushfire/Pages/publications.aspx
Emergency Alert	www.emergencyalert.gov.au/
Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)	www.bom.gov.au
BOM Forecast Areas Map	www.bom.gov.au/wa/forecasts/map.shtml?ref=hdr
BOM National Weather Warnings	www.bom.gov.au/australia/warnings/index.shtml
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)	www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/management/fire
Triple Zero Challenge	www.kids.triplezero.gov.au
Disaster Resilience Education for Young People (Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection) – Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) (2021)	https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/collections/handbook-collection/

Curriculum Links

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION: *Personal, social and community health*			
Year	**Strand**	**Content Descriptors**	**Module**
Pre Primary	Being healthy, safe and active	• Protective behaviours to keep safe and healthy • Trusted people in the community who can help individuals feel safe	• How Bushfires Start • Matches are Tools not Toys • Responding to Fire – Seeking Help
	Contributing to healthy and active communities	• Safe active play in outdoor settings and natural settings • Actions that promote health, safety and wellbeing	• How Bushfires Start • Matches are Tools not Toys • Responding to Fire – Seeking Help
Year 1	Being healthy, safe and active	• Strategies to use when help is needed	• Matches are Tools not Toys • Responding to Fire – Seeking Help
	Contributing to healthy and active communities	• Actions that support a safe classroom	• Matches are Tools not Toys • Responding to Fire – Seeking Help
Year 2	Being healthy, safe and active	• Strategies to use when help is needed	• Matches are Tools not Toys • Responding to Fire – Seeking Help
	Contributing to healthy and active communities	• Actions that keep people safe and healthy in and outside the classroom	• How Bushfires Start • Matches are Tools not Toys • Responding to Fire – Seeking Help
Year 3	Being healthy, safe and active	• Assertive behaviours and communication skills to respond to unsafe situations	• How Bushfires Start • Matches are Tools not Toys • Responding to Fire – Seeking Help

SCIENCE: *Science Understanding*			
Year	**Strand**	**Content Descriptors**	**Module**
Pre Primary	Earth and Space Sciences	• Daily and seasonal changes in our environment affect everyday life	• What Bushfires Like
	Biological Sciences	• Living things have basic needs, including food and water	• Ready to Leave
Year 1	Earth and Space Sciences	• Observable changes occur in the sky and landscape	• What Bushfires Like
	Biological Sciences	• Livings things live in different places where their needs are met	• Ready to Leave
Year 3	Physical Sciences	• Heat can be produced in many ways and can move from one object to another	• How Bushfires Start • What Bushfires Like

Note: Science as Human Endeavour and Science Inquiry Skills are consistent across all lessons

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE: *Civics and Citizenship*			
Year	**Strand**	**Content Descriptors**	**Module**
Year 3	Knowledge and Understanding: Communities	• Who makes rules, why rules are important and the consequences of rules not being followed • How students can actively participate and contribute to their local community	• How Bushfires Start • Matches are Tools not Toys • Responding to Fire – Seeking Help

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE: *Geography*			
Year	**Strand**	**Content Descriptors**	**Module**
Pre Primary	Knowledge and Understanding: People live in places	• The places people live in and belong to, the familiar features in the local area and why places are important to people • The reasons some places are special to people and how they can be looked after, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's places of significance	• Responding to Fire – Seeking Help • What Bushfires Like
Year 1	Knowledge and Understanding: Places have distinct features	• The natural, managed and constructed features of places, their location on a pictorial map, how they may change over time and how they can be cared for • How weather and seasons vary between places, and the terms used to describe them	• Responding to Fire – Seeking Help • What Bushfires Like
Year 2	Knowledge and Understanding: People are connected to many places	• Local features and places are given names, which have meaning to people, and these places can be defined on a variety of scales, including personal (e.g. home), local (e.g. street, suburb or town), regional (e.g. state) and national (e.g. country)	• Responding to Fire – Seeking Help

Note: Humanities and Social Sciences skills are consistent across all lessons

Cross Curriculum Subjects
English: Creating Literature, Expressing and Developing Ideas, Interacting with Others, Creating Text
Maths: Measurement and Geometry, Statistics and Probability

General Capabilities
Literacy, Information and communication technology capability, Critical and creative thinking, Personal and social capability, Ethical understanding, Intercultural understanding

Cross Curriculum Priorities
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Sustainability