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Contacts
Department of Fire and Emergency Services
Emergency Services Complex
20 Stockton Bend
Cockburn Central, Perth WA 6164

For school aged education enquiries:
Call: (08) 9395 9816
Email: educationandheritage@dfes.wa.gov.au
About This Program

*Bushfire Patrol* is a Western Australian Curriculum-linked bushfire education program for the Southwest Land Division (see Figure 1), suitable for primary school students from Geraldton through to Esperance. DFES School Aged Education provides a similar classroom resource, *North West Bushfire Patrol* for schools in the North West of Western Australia.

The intended outcome of *Bushfire Patrol* is to raise students’ awareness of bushfire and its consequences, whilst further developing a range of skills to help them respond to bushfire when it occurs. 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.

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

**Previous Experience with Fire**

Within your school community there may be families who have had a personal experience of bushfire. Teachers need to be aware of any student who may find the topic distressing and should take actions for the wellbeing of that child.

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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.

There are children who are fascinated by fire and who are already either lighting fires or endangering themselves by getting close to fire. The DFES Juvenile & Family Fire Awareness (JAFFA) Program is available for these children and their families.

Specially trained firefighters deliver JAFFA in the family home. JAFFA includes an interview with the parent/s and child, and, a specially adapted education session that assists the young person to understand the consequences of playing with fire. Please contact the DFES JAFFA Coordinator on 9395 9488, email jaffa@dfes.wa.gov.au or go to dfes.wa.gov.au/jaffa to refer a child to the program or to find out more.

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.

Disaster Risk Reduction programs have the following five dimensions:

1. Understanding the science and mechanisms of natural disasters
   - Why they happen
   - How they develop
   - Where they occur
   - Their frequency
   - Their physical impacts
2. Learning and practising safety measures and procedures
3. Understanding risk and how hazards can become disasters
4. Building community risk reduction capacity by identifying local hazards and developing plans to respond to them
5. Building a culture of safety and resilience

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

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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

Using this Learning Program

_Bushfire Patrol_ has been written for teachers and provides lesson plans, photos, illustrations and worksheets for Pre-Primary to Year 3. The lessons are ideally delivered as a whole unit of work to provide students with opportunities to work towards achieving all disaster risk outcomes.

Before beginning the program it is recommended that students complete the introduction activity (Critical Thinking and Reflection) found in the Appendix, allowing students to apply critical thinking skills to identify what they know and what they don’t know about bushfire. Revisit these ideas throughout the learning process to help both teacher and students reflect on what they have learnt so far and what they still need to find out.

_Bushfire Patrol_ (Pre-Primary to Year 3) contains five modules.

- Module One: How Bushfires Start
- Module Two: Matches are Tools, not Toys
- Module Three: Responding to Fire – Seeking Help
- Module Four: What Bushfires Like
- Module Five: Ready to Leave

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.

**Arranging a Firefighter Visit**

To organise a visit from local firefighters, contact your local DFES office ([dfes.wa.gov.au/contactus](http://dfes.wa.gov.au/contactus)) to see if a visit is possible. As most emergency services are provided by volunteers in regional areas of Western Australia, it may not always be possible for a firefighter to visit your school. Career firefighters deliver a home fire safety program to Year 3 students in schools and other school visits are additional to their work load. Their operational requirements, particularly during the bushfire season may make additional school visits impracticable.

The purpose of the firefighter visit is to reinforce the key messages of *Bushfire Patrol*. In addition, the visit provides students with the opportunity to learn more about community helpers and what they do. A firefighter visit is designed to be delivered to one class at a time. The effectiveness of the presentation relies on students being able to interact with firefighters and is not suitable for a larger audience.

Whilst some firefighters may have experience working with young children, the main role of firefighters is to fight fires. They may need your help to make sure the visit runs smoothly. To ensure that all students benefit from this presentation, teachers are asked to take responsibility for their students’ behaviour. Firefighters may or may not bring a fire truck to the visit.

There is always the possibility that firefighters may fail to attend or could be called away during a school visit due to an emergency. Discuss this possibility with your students before the visit, to avoid or to reduce disappointment.
Knowing your Local Community

Western Australia is a vast area and the range of emergency services varies between larger towns and more remote regions. Volunteer organisations play a vital role in providing services to regional towns and communities. There is value in knowing your local area and what emergency services and volunteer organisations are available as this will influence how you teach certain parts of the program.

The following organisations can be contacted for more information regarding local emergency services:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) regional offices** | • Great Southern  
• Upper Great Southern  
• Goldfields/Midlands  
• Midwest/Gascoyne  
• South West  
• Lower South West |
| **Bushfire Brigades (BFB)**                                   | • Western Australia has 19,500 bush fire service volunteers who protect WA from bushfires through fire prevention and risk management, fire suppression and fire safety education  
• Contact your local government for more information about your local bushfire brigade/s. |
| **Volunteer Fire and Rescue Brigades (VFRS)**                 | • Over 2,300 volunteers from 94 brigades in Western Australia provide firefighting and prevention services. |
| **Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services (VFES)**              | • Some communities have multi-function units operated by volunteers who are trained for a number of emergencies and natural disasters. |

School Bushfire Emergency Plans

If your school is in or near a designated bushfire prone area, bushfires are a real risk to you and your students, your buildings and school grounds. DFES recommends that a stand-alone bushfire emergency plan is developed by all schools in bushfire prone areas. Find out if your school is at risk to bushfires³ by using the DFES Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas. Speak to

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³ Over 400 government schools in bushfire prone areas are on the Department of Education’s Bushfire Zone Register. A DFES Bushfire Risk Management Liaison Officer provides advice to government schools on bushfire plan development. It is not the role of career firefighters to provide assistance in bushfire planning. Non-government schools may need to employ a fire engineer (or other expert) to assist them with their bushfire plans.
your school management team about your school’s bushfire emergency plan.

It would be highly valuable for you to organise and conduct school or classroom bushfire drills while undertaking this learning program. Make sure that students understand what a bushfire drill is and why it is important. Involve students in an activity where they reflect on how effective the drill was and if it can be improved.

**Household Bushfire Emergency Plans**

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 ‘5 minute fire 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 [firechat.wa.gov.au](http://firechat.wa.gov.au) – Fire Chat is the main online tool used in Western Australia for people to create a Bushfire Survival Plan. A link to Fire Chat is provided in the *Parent Information Sheet* found in the Appendix.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Resources and Useful Web Links</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EmergencyWA</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFES Fire Danger Ratings</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFES Bushfire Publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Look at Traditional Aboriginal burning and the Karla Wongi – Fire Talk which provides a Nyungar perspective on fire management.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Alert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOM Forecast Areas Map</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triple Zero Challenge</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix

An Introduction Activity to the Modules

Before beginning this program we recommend that students undertake the following introduction activity. It allows students to apply critical thinking skills to identify what they know and what they don’t know about bushfires. Revisit these ideas throughout the learning process to help both you and your students reflect on what they have learnt and what they still need to find out.

Things you will need
- Introduction to Bushfires slideshow
- Critical Thinking and Learning chart to display in your classroom (see below, or use the templates provided within the slideshow)
- Introduction to Bushfires – Teacher Instruction and Answer Sheet

Introduction Activity

1. Use the Introduction to Bushfires slideshow to prompt a discussion and explore what students know and don’t know about bushfires. For example, what can start a bushfire? How do we put out a bushfire?
2. As a class, list all the things students know and don’t know about bushfires. You may choose to use the additional templates provided in the slideshow. See Introduction to Bushfires – Teacher Instruction and Answer Sheet for further instructions.
3. Display this information in the classroom so it can be referred to throughout the learning process.
4. Revisit your chart after the completion of each module to review students’ initial ideas. (Were students correct about what they know? Do they now know the answer to some of their questions? What more do they want to know?)

Critical thinking and learning template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do we know about bushfire?</th>
<th>What don’t we know about bushfires?</th>
<th>What do we want to know about bushfires?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Parent Information Sheet

Bushfire Patrol

Dear Parent/Carer

This term our class is learning about bushfires in Western Australia. We are using a Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) program called Bushfire Patrol.

Bushfire Patrol aims to increase your child’s understanding of bushfire and provide them with life-long skills to prevent, prepare and respond to bushfires.

We encourage you to talk to your child about what they are learning in class and work as a family to complete any homework activities they may bring home. By completing the activities as a family, you will help reinforce your child’s learning and increase your family and home’s safety before and during the bushfire season.

Find out more about how to prepare for bushfires as a family on the DFES website and have a 5 minute Fire Chat: firechat.wa.gov.au

Keep up to date with Bushfire Warnings in your area using EmergencyWA: emergency.wa.gov.au/

If you want to know more about what your child is learning in class, you can download Bushfire Patrol from the DFES education page: dfes.wa.gov.au/schooleducation.

We hope you and your child enjoy Bushfire Patrol and are well prepared for the bushfire season.

Best wishes
Curriculum Links

**HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION: Personal, social and community health**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Content Descriptors</th>
<th>Module</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Primary</td>
<td>Being healthy, safe and active</td>
<td>• Protective behaviours to keep safe and healthy</td>
<td>• How Bushfires Start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Trusted people in the community who can help individuals feel safe</td>
<td>• Matches are Tools not Toys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contributing to healthy and active communities</td>
<td>• Safe active play in outdoor settings and natural settings</td>
<td>• Responding to Fire – Seeking Help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Actions that promote health, safety and wellbeing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Being healthy, safe and active</td>
<td>• Strategies to use when help is needed</td>
<td>• Matches are Tools not Toys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contributing to healthy and active communities</td>
<td>• Actions that support a safe classroom</td>
<td>• Responding to Fire – Seeking Help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Being healthy, safe and active</td>
<td>• Strategies to use when help is needed</td>
<td>• Matches are Tools not Toys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contributing to healthy and active communities</td>
<td>• Actions that keep people safe and healthy in and outside the classroom</td>
<td>• Responding to Fire – Seeking Help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Being healthy, safe and active</td>
<td>• Assertive behaviours and communication skills to respond to unsafe situations</td>
<td>• How Bushfires Start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Matches are Tools not Toys</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• Responding to Fire – Seeking Help</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## SCIENCE: Science Understanding

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

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

## HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE: Civics and Citizenship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Content Descriptors</th>
<th>Module</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Content Descriptors</th>
<th>Module</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Pre Primary  | Knowledge and Understanding:  | - 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 | Places live in places |
|              | People live in places         | | | |
| Year 1       | Knowledge and Understanding:  | - 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 | Places have distinct features |
|              | Places have distinct features | | | |
| Year 2       | Knowledge and Understanding:  | - 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  
  - What Bushfires Like | People are connected to many places |
|              | People are connected to many places | | | |

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