



RISK MANAGEMENT AT TIMBERTOP FACT SHEET

Thursday 16 January 2020

Impact of bushfires

Timbertop has not been impacted by the bushfires and there is no immediate threat of fire at Timbertop. The significant bushfire activity has been focussed some distance to the north and east of Timbertop. Whilst there have been smaller fires in the Alpine region, milder weather conditions and rainfall in recent days (including substantial rainfall at Timbertop on the afternoon/evening of Wednesday 15 January) has assisted with fire suppression across Victoria and southern New South Wales. As per our usual practices, we continue to monitor weather conditions and work closely with all the relevant authorities, including the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Parks Victoria, to avoid exposure to potential fire activity. Mount Buller remains open to visitors as does the surrounding Alpine National Park.

Start of year

The school year will start at Timbertop as planned. New students entering Geelong Grammar School in Year 9 will arrive on Wednesday 29 January. Students joining Timbertop from our Corio Campus will arrive on Thursday 30 January. Parents should drive their children to Timbertop at the start of the year (note: there is no bus service to Timbertop at the start of the year) but please do not arrive prior to 9.30am. The Head and Deputy Head of Timbertop will be available from 9.30am to 1.00pm on both days should parents/students wish to see them. Refreshments will be provided in the Dining Hall for visitors from 11.00am each day and we will also provide lunch for parents and students at 1.00pm on both days. There will be a meeting in the Dining Hall for parents and students at 2.30pm on both days at which the Head of Timbertop formally welcomes all students and parents to Timbertop, briefly discusses some important matters such as communication between home and school, safety issues and introduces some staff with whom parents might deal with over the course of the year. We will notify parents directly if there any changes to arrival times and dates.

Evacuation policy and procedure

The safety and wellbeing of students and staff is our priority. Our safety record at Timbertop is excellent and we take great care to minimise risk. Robust policies and procedures support our risk management strategies, including where evacuation of the campus is considered the most appropriate response. Whilst we have a state-of-the-art fire refuge/safe haven in the centre of our campus, we liaise with the relevant authorities, including Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), to inform any decision to evacuate the campus. Evacuation will only occur when it is the safest option, before there is any foreseeable threat of fire on campus. We have a large fleet of vehicles and access to the local bus fleet in the event of an evacuation. Access to the main Mansfield-Mount Buller Road is available via two alternative tracks, as well as by the school road itself. Timbertop students and staff were evacuated to our Corio Campus in 2009, prior to the building of our fire refuge/safe haven.

Fire refuge/safe haven

We have a purpose built, mostly underground, safe haven in the centre of our campus. This facility has its own oxygen supply, auxiliary power generators, underground water tanks and fire shutters. This underground building is designed to house up to 320 people in case of emergency. It was designed and built to exceed all future safety standards. The majority of the time it is divided into three classrooms, which are used daily during term time.

Air quality

We continually monitor air quality and manage student activity according to our Air Quality Risk Assessment matrix and Environment Protection Authority (EPA) air quality monitoring and forecasts. We have a supply of P2/N95-rated face masks, which can help filter fine particles in smoke, if required. Thankfully, local conditions at Timbertop are generally better than in valleys and/or at lower altitude, and have generally been similar and/or better than the air quality experienced recently in some capital cities.

Fire management planning

Timbertop undertakes comprehensive preventative measures to reduce the possibility of bushfires. We conduct regular vegetation audits and reduce fire fuel loads, slashing tall grasses and cutting undergrowth. We regularly construct and maintains fire breaks to create buffer zones as part of an ongoing fire management plan, in consultation with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

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