



Wildfire Preparedness and Evacuation Plan

Overview

Head-Royce School is located near the outer edge of what is defined by The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) as a “Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone”. It is therefore important to have a detailed wildfire response plan in place to prepare for potential wildfire emergencies. This Wildfire Preparedness and Evacuation Plan serves as the main wildfire response plan for the school.

There are three main activities involved in this process: Monitoring, Decision-making, and Evacuation, when necessary.

Monitoring: making use of available resources to assess the extent of the risk and track ongoing changes to the situation, so that sound decisions may be made.

Decision-making: determining whether or not to pre-emptively close the campus when wildfire threats exist and, in the event that students are on campus when a wildfire is nearby, what actions to take to ensure the safety of both students and adults, including the safety of neighbors.

Evacuation if Necessary: taking detailed action steps for wildfire emergencies that occur while students are still on campus (temporary refuge, shelter in place, evacuation off campus)

Effective communications are essential at each step of the above process.

MONITORING

A key advantage to wildfire emergencies — as compared to other types of emergencies such as earthquakes — is that populated areas generally (but not always) have 24 to 72 hours' notice of impending fire threats. Improved analysis of current conditions, combined with advances in weather forecasting, has helped local communities to raise awareness during periods of elevated fire risk, providing valuable time to prepare and to determine the appropriate response to changing conditions. As a result, residents should generally not be taken by surprise when nearby wildfires are reported. Remaining well-informed regarding the current conditions and well-prepared to respond to those conditions are the keys to a successful response.

The ideal scenario is one in which decision-makers are so effective in their monitoring of the environment and decision-making that, if/when a wildfire reaches the campus, there will be no need to evacuate because there will be no students on campus, with the campus having already been preemptively closed in anticipation of the wildfire. However, if the situation is such that wildfire reaches the campus when students are present, students and staff must be prepared to execute an evacuation from campus as outlined below.

Wildfire Decision Team: The school has created a Wildfire Decision Team (“Team”) to monitor local conditions and take appropriate actions to ensure the safety of the school community when necessary. Members of this team are enrolled in multiple services that provide automatic notifications of pending Red Flag Warnings (RFW), Air Quality Alerts, PG&E PSPS shut-offs, and other emergency events affecting the geographic area of the school. These alert systems include AC Alert/Everbridge, Zonehaven, and the Interactive National Weather Service (INWS). News media outlets will also be used as an information source. AC Alert is an app-based emergency alert system serving Oakland and surrounding cities by providing critical information quickly in a variety of situations such as earthquakes, fires, severe weather, unexpected road closure,s and evacuations of buildings or neighborhoods. Zonehaven is a commercial software application designed to help first responders manage emergency evacuations.

During an emergency, Oakland’s Police/Fire Departments will communicate warnings or orders for one or more zones using AC Alert, local radio stations, social media, and even door-to-door notices. The zone in which the school is located is **Zone OKL-E103**. Zones evacuated or under an evacuation warning can be viewed on the web at community.zonehaven.com. The INWS sends customized text messages and email alert warnings about severe weather, including fire weather.

The Wildfire Decision Team is made up of the following individuals:

- Head of School
- Chief Financial and Operating Officer
- Director of Marketing and Communications
- Fire Emergency Consultant (Shane Lauderdale, Founder/Principal of PyroAnalysis)

The Wildfire Decision Team will also ensure that the City of Oakland is provided with a copy of the school’s full Emergency Plan each year, as is required by its Conditions of Approval. The Wildfire Preparedness and Evacuation Plan is considered to be an adjunct to this Emergency Plan and, as such, is referenced and linked in that plan document.

Drill protocols, assignment of specific responsibilities, and other emergency preparedness details are covered in the school’s Emergency Plan and are updated at least annually. In

addition to fire safety, the plan is designed to address other areas of safety risk, such as earthquakes, lockdowns, bomb threats, and shelter-in-place events.

Drills pertaining to wildfire safety/evacuation are scheduled to take place at least twice per year, and should be observed by representatives of the Oakland Fire Department.

DECISION-MAKING

In determining the appropriate response to a potential wildfire threat, the following options will be considered:

- Maintain all normal school operations while continuing to monitor conditions.
- Maintain on-campus instruction but reschedule/relocate other school events (e.g., sports events, theater, and performing arts programs).
- Maintain on-campus instruction for Upper and/or Middle school, but cancel on-campus instruction for Lower school.
- Cancel on-campus instruction for all students. Ideally, such cancellations would be communicated no later than the day before the closure, so that students and staff avoid the campus altogether.

Red Flag Warnings: If a Red Flag Warning or Fire Weather Watch is issued for the school area, the school's Wildfire Decision Team will be convened for evaluation of the risk. The Team will communicate to the school community that Red Flag conditions exist for the day, and that further steps—including the potential for a campus closure—may become necessary.

Evacuation Orders/Warnings: The Wildfire Decision Team will ensure that students and faculty will not come to campus if a wildfire **Evacuation Order** or **Evacuation Warning** has been issued by a governmental authority before the start of a school day. If the Evacuation Order is issued after the commencement of the school day, the Incident Commander ("IC") and the Wildfire Decision Team will work together to evacuate the campus in accordance with the protocols in this Plan.

Public Safety Power Shutdown (PSPS) Events: When wildfire risk is particularly high for the area surrounding the school, PG&E may announce a power shutdown (PSPS event) impacting the campus. PG&E provides notice of such projected shut-offs to all PG&E account holders through texts, emails, and phone calls. The school is a PG&E customer and will be notified in advance of all pending PSPS events. **Should a PSPS event occur, the campus will be closed for instruction and other school activities during the shutdown period, and no students will be allowed on campus.** If the shutdown occurs while school is in session, the Head of School will determine if the school will close early, depending on the circumstances at the time.

EVACUATION

If students are on campus and a wildfire is unexpectedly reported in the vicinity of the school, with the potential to reach the campus while students and faculty are on campus, relocating all students and other community members to the gym is advised as a precautionary measure. Once all members of the school community are safely inside the gym, the IC will assess whether to continue to utilize the gym as a Temporary Refuge Area (TRA) or to relocate to the athletic field or an alternative off-campus location, depending on the circumstances.

An early dismissal/reunification process may be considered, unless the school is advised otherwise by authorities. Unless otherwise advised by the authorities, all students must remain at the designated assembly area until released as outlined in the school's standard student release procedures (see "Student Release" section below).

Pedestrian evacuation of the school is to be utilized only if fire conditions allow for safe egress and all other evacuation assembly areas are deemed unsafe.

To ensure that Lincoln Avenue remains accessible for first responders and vehicular evacuation of the surrounding neighborhood, **parents and guardians are NOT to pick up their child from the campus if an immediate wildfire emergency is declared**. Instead, they will be provided direction by the Communications Team to either wait for the immediate danger to subside while students shelter in place on campus, or to reunify with their student(s) in one of two offsite locations (see "Evacuation Route Maps" below).

The purpose of this rule is to allow first responders to use Lincoln Avenue for access to fight a wildfire and to allow vehicular evacuation of the neighborhood if needed.

Communications with Local Authorities and Decision to Evacuate

As with all school-related emergency events, the highest-level administrator should be prepared to establish an Incident Command Post and serve as Incident Commander (IC) in response to the incident or threat to the school. The IC will organize First Aid and Search and Rescue teams, and order an evacuation of the campus if necessary. If an administrator is not available, a capable staff or faculty member will serve as IC.

The IC will ensure that the Command Post location is known to all staff members via the PA system or the [Ruvna Emergency App](#), the school's internal emergency communications application, and will direct students and adults to the nearest safe space. Given the number of people involved and the need to reserve Lincoln Avenue for emergency vehicles and first responders, evacuations to off-campus locations should occur on foot rather than by vehicle.

Evacuating from the campus should only occur if absolutely necessary, as our campus is likely to be the safest location in the area to shelter in place and await updates from local authorities. **Parents will be instructed NOT to come to campus to pick up their children**

during a campus evacuation, but instead to meet their children at the off-site evacuation/reunification area when notified to do so.

Ultimately, the decision to abandon the campus and evacuate to an off-site location will be made by the IC. The IC and all key personnel will utilize AC Alert/Everbridge, Zonehaven, and the National Weather Service alerts for decision-making. The school will utilize social media platforms, battery-equipped radios, cell phones, and other available communications technology to obtain information from local authorities, to the extent that such information is available, in an emergency. If information from local authorities is not available, the IC will make this decision to the best of his or her ability based on the best information available.

When the incident requires ongoing parent/guardian updates, the IC will form a Communications Team to advise parents/guardians of the current situation, provide reunification instructions, and address any community concerns. The school maintains a text database for emergency communications to parents and also has access to one or more email addresses and phone numbers for each parent. Texts, emails, and robocalls are available means for such communications via the Ruvna app. The IC will assign one or more staff or faculty members to monitor available social media platforms and to provide the IC with timely event updates.

For wildfire events requiring evacuation from campus, the default destination for evacuation/reunification is the **CalTrans Park & Ride lot** located under the MacArthur Avenue/Interstate 580 overpass (across the street from the CVS store at 3320 Fruitvale Avenue). The [CalTrans Park & Ride](#) lot is approximately 1.2 miles down Lincoln Avenue from the school and is designated as the primary evacuation destination. A secondary evacuation/reunification area is **Dimond Park Tennis Courts**, located at the intersection of Fruitvale Avenue and Lyman Road. The tennis courts are located approximately 0.7 miles from the school.

The IC will instruct all members of the school community to leave books, backpacks, and other belongings, including bicycles and motor vehicles, on campus. The IC will organize the school community into groups at the Emergency Assembly Area (normally the gym in the case of a wildfire). Adult personnel will walk with groups of up to twenty grade 6-12 students and up to 10 grade K-5 students down the hill to the off-site evacuation/reunification site. Students will be instructed to leave campus in pairs using either of the main gates to the North and South Campuses. These gates have the widest egress pathways and should be the first choice in any evacuation. Alternative exits from campus include the middle gate (on Lincoln Avenue between the Gatehouse and Lot F), the Whittle gate, the driveway to the athletic fields on the North Campus, and the stairs to the tennis court, allowing egress to Whittle Avenue. Although school gates are generally locked to limit access from outside, they are all equipped with panic bars to allow immediate exit in case of emergency.

Students will be instructed to walk in pairs on the sidewalks and to stay out of the parking and travel lanes to allow emergency and other vehicles to pass. If Lincoln Avenue is impassable to pedestrians, students will use Whittle and Fruitvale Avenues to walk to the off-campus meeting place. See “Evacuation Route” maps below, which show the pedestrian evacuation routes and locations of off-site evacuation/reunification assembly areas.

Special Rules for K-5 Students and Disabled Members of the Community

In the event of an emergency requiring pedestrian evacuation, Lower School personnel will be assigned to assist with students in grades K-5. Three additional staff members will be designated to assist with the evacuation of staff or students with physical disabilities. If individuals with physical disabilities are not capable of a pedestrian evacuation, they will be transported by vehicle to the designated off-campus assembly area. During an emergency pedestrian evacuation, the school community shall be instructed to stay on sidewalks where they exist and to stay out of parking or travel lanes.

Alternative Bus Evacuation Plan

If time permits, students in grades K-2 and any disabled members of the community will be evacuated by the school’s six mini-buses, which each seat seven persons. If a return to campus by vehicle is possible and if time permits, these mini-buses will return to campus to shuttle students in grades 3-5 to the offsite evacuation area. Both the Whittle gate and the vehicle gate to Lot F are equipped to be opened manually if the campus loses power.

After reaching the alternate location, it will still be important to remain in place until it is safe to begin the student release process. If the student release process is initiated from a remote location, the same procedures and safeguards applicable to the on-campus process (see below) should be followed to ensure the safety of each student.

Sheltering in Place at Remote Location

Upon arrival at the evacuation destination, students and adults should attempt to congregate with one another as closely as possible. If circumstances allow, groups should assemble in a pattern similar to the formation used for all-school fire drills, as this will facilitate the reunification process. It is important that attendance be taken immediately upon arrival so that any missing persons can be identified and accounted for as quickly as possible.

Student Release

While sheltering in place, whether on campus or off campus, we should expect pressure from parents and students to move to the reunification phase as quickly as possible. However, it is important to keep in mind that Lincoln Avenue is a crucial pathway for emergency vehicle access/egress in addition to other neighborhood traffic. It is therefore critical that we **avoid initiating the reunification process prematurely**. Incident Command should be careful to stay in shelter-in-place mode until we are confident that local roadways are sufficiently cleared of emergency traffic so that the reunification process can proceed smoothly.

The Communications Team should immediately advise parents through the established electronic means that we are in “shelter in place” mode, and that further instructions will be provided when it is safe for students to be picked up by parents. **Parents must be instructed NOT to attempt to pick up their student prior to the time frame specified,** for the reasons mentioned above. Periodic electronic updates should be transmitted to the parent community to reassure them that the shelter-in-place process is continuing successfully, and that the reunification process will commence as soon as it is safe to do so.

When it is safe to release students, it is expected that the evacuation process will proceed sequentially by grade, for example, with kindergarten students picked up first and 12th grade students last. For families with multiple students, all students in the household may be released with the youngest student. The Communications Team will transmit regular electronic messages to parents throughout the process to ensure that the community is well-informed and that there is an orderly process that minimizes the amount of vehicle traffic near the shelter-in-place location. If, for any reason, the nearest street is not available, the IC will coordinate with local authorities to identify the nearest safe location to execute the reunification process.

