



Bellinghen High School

Flood Plan



Background

Floods in Bellinghen are unpredictable and there is no particular pattern related to onset, duration nor time of the year. The elements of the plan address safety in the following contexts:

- **Advice to parents and students prior to the start of a school day.**
- **Advice to parents and students about the ongoing status of the school.**
- **Evacuation procedures during a school day.**

Advice to parents and students prior to the start of a school day

Accurate information is critical when an assessment of flood impact has to be made. Schools have no more information than is available to the public. Parents are always advised to check flood warnings, SES bulletins and road closure information. They are often best placed to make an assessment of their particular location. **If in doubt keep your child/ren home.**

Announcements of the school's capacity to run classes normally or with reduced staff will be made available on ABC Radio at 6.30am when possible. Parents may check the school website or ring the school noting that the information from the school will duplicate those details.

Advice to parents and students about the ongoing status of the school

Speculation in flood times is a normal feature of flood life. Schools are not any more informed about river levels than the community in general.

Floods never happen at convenient times. The school will be guided by advice from Council, SES and RTA. When possible that advice will be communicated at the end of a school day. If a flood escalates outside school hours ABC radio and school website will be the **only** official sources of media release. The Principal will be the **only** person to authorise information about conditions where applicable.

Evacuation procedures during a school day

Generally, certain areas around Bellinghen flood more rapidly than others. If buses advise an early departure and if there is sufficient warning to go to the relevant students from class then staff will assemble students.

If there is insufficient warning or there are multiple evacuations then an assembly bell will be sounded. Students will be briefed and advised to remain on standby if there are further road closures.

In **all** cases parents or emergency contacts will be phoned to ensure that there is someone at home. Where contact is not possible the Principal will organise alternative accommodation. That contingency is rare and can be avoided if parents are mindful of pending river rises and have their own communication strategy in place.

Paul Holding

Principal

20 February 2014