



Bushfire Risk – 2018 – 2019 Season

School procedures for the bushfire season

Fire danger ratings and warnings are used in Victoria to provide clear direction on the safest options for preserving life.

Schools and children's services listed on the DET Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) will be closed when a Code Red fire danger rating day is determined in their Bureau of Meteorology district. **Our school has been identified as being one of those at high bushfire risk and is listed on the BARR.**



Where possible, we will provide parents with up to four days notice of a potential Code Red day closure by letter, phone and via our website. A Code Red day will be determined by the Emergency Management Commissioner no later than 1.00 pm the day before the potential closure. Once we are advised of the confirmation of the Code Red day we will provide you with advice before the end of the school day.

Once confirmed, the decision to close will not change, regardless of improvements in the weather forecast. This is to avoid confusion and help your family plan alternative care arrangements for your child. It is also important to note that:

- No staff will be on site on days where the school is closed due to a forecast Code Red day.
- School camps will be cancelled if a Code Red fire danger rating day is determined for the Bureau of Meteorology district in which the camp is located.
- As a bus co-ordinating school all bus routes will be cancelled.

On these Code Red days families are encouraged to enact their Bushfire Survival Plan – **on such days children should never be left at home or in the care of older children.**

For those of us living in a bushfire prone area, the CFA advise that when Code Red days are forecast, the safest option is to leave the night before or early on the morning of the Code Red day.

As part of preparing our school for potential hazards such as fire, we have updated and completed our Emergency Management Plan. If you would like further information regarding our Emergency Management Plan, please contact Mrs Anne Gawith or Mrs Sally Klinge at the college. **5389 1460**

Furthermore, the school liaises closely with the local CFA to ensure that all practical precautions are taken to reduce our fire risk.



Pre-emptive closure on Extreme Fire Days

The Department of Education and Training (DET) in association with Emergency Management Victoria have worked closely to develop new policy that will ensure Victorian schools are prepared for bushfire season. Currently when a Code Red Fire Danger Rating (FDR) day has been determined, schools on the Bushfire At Risk Register (BARR) are required to pre-emptively close.

Now, under a new policy developed by DET, certain schools in exceptional circumstances may also pre-emptively close or relocate on days where an Extreme FDR day has been forecast.

A decision to close or relocate will only be made in extreme circumstances and through close consultation with the Department of Education and Training, and advice from Emergency Management Victoria.

Parents will be notified of any closure or relocation by 3.00pm the day prior to the forecast Extreme (FDR) day.

Our highest priority is the safety of all of our students and staff, and the Department and Emergency Management Victoria have worked closely on this policy to ensure that all schools are prepared for the bushfire season.

Any parents wishing to receive further information about this policy can contact Anne Gawith or Sally Klinge at the college.



What can parents do?

- Make sure your family's bushfire survival plan is up-to-date and includes alternative care arrangements in the event that our school is closed.
- Ensure we have your current contact details, including your mobile phone numbers. Keep in touch with us by reading our newsletters and by regularly checking our school website.

www.dmsc.vic.edu.au

- Most importantly at this time of year, if you're planning a holiday or short stay in the bush or in a coastal area, you should check warnings in advance of travel and remain vigilant during your stay.
- If your child is old enough, talk to them about bushfires and your family's bushfire survival plan.
- You can access more information about children's services closures on the Department of Education and Training website – see <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/pages/closures.aspx>

For up-to-date information on this year's fire season, visit the CFA website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au or call the 24-hour Victorian Bushfires Information Line on 1800 240 667.