

School Procedures for the Bushfire Season



The way schools in Victoria respond to bushfires is being constantly revised. 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 – identified as being at highest bushfire risk have been included on the Bushfire-At Risk Register (BARR) and will be closed on days determined by fire authorities to be Code Red. Our **Scotsburn Campus** has been identified by Government as a school at highest bushfire risk and is listed on the BARR. This does not include our Buninyong Campus, however Buninyong students will be affected if they are bus travellers. (please read below)

Where possible, we will provide parents with up to three days’ notice of a planned closure following the issue of a Code Red warning by the CFA. We will contact you directly with advice on planned closures. This will be done via a letter home to all families, but will be backed up with messages sent via SMS, Compass and a posting on the school website. Contact will also be made to confirm the decision to close by 12 noon the day before the planned closure.

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.

- No staff will be on the Scotsburn site on Code Red Days.
- Scotsburn students are welcome to attend our Buninyong Campus on Code Red Days, where they will work with their regular classmates and teacher in available spaces.
- Each of the buses that service our school travel through areas classified by government as ‘high fire risk’. ***As such, none of the country bus runs that service our school will run during a Code Red Day.*** This obviously effects families from both campuses. Bus travellers will need to find other means of transport to and from school on Code Red Days.
- School camps will be cancelled if the area where the camp is taking place is at risk.

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

For those of us living in a bushfire-prone area, the safest option when a Code Red day is declared may be to leave the night before, or early in the morning of the Code Red day.

What can parents do?

- Make sure your family's Bushfire Survival Plan is up-to-date and includes alternative care arrangements for your children 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, by checking our website (www.buninyongps.vic.edu.au), and by talking to your child's teacher or any other member of the teaching staff about our emergency plans.
- 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 school closures on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development website – see

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/pages/emergencies.aspx>

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