

Bushfire Emergency Plans

The School understands that during summer, families may be a little bit nervous about the safety of their children with respect to bushfires and our school being located in the Dandenongs.

OUR BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

In terms of our buildings, these have been built with a high thermal capacity. When we build, the school is required to do a Bushfire Management Overlay. We have also installed a heavy-duty firefighting system throughout the school, and have a four-metre wide fire track that encircles all the built areas. We have a scheduled maintenance plan that includes amongst other things debris and tree lines.

OUR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

We review our “Emergency Management Plan” each year and have evacuation plans in place. Our OH&S Officers meets on site with a CFA representative annually to specifically review our planned response to a bushfire threat. In the event of exposure to an immediate bushfire or grassfire threat, we will enact our Emergency Management Plan (EMP).

In the case where an evacuation is not possible, our Gym will act as a shelter-in-place for anyone on site.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

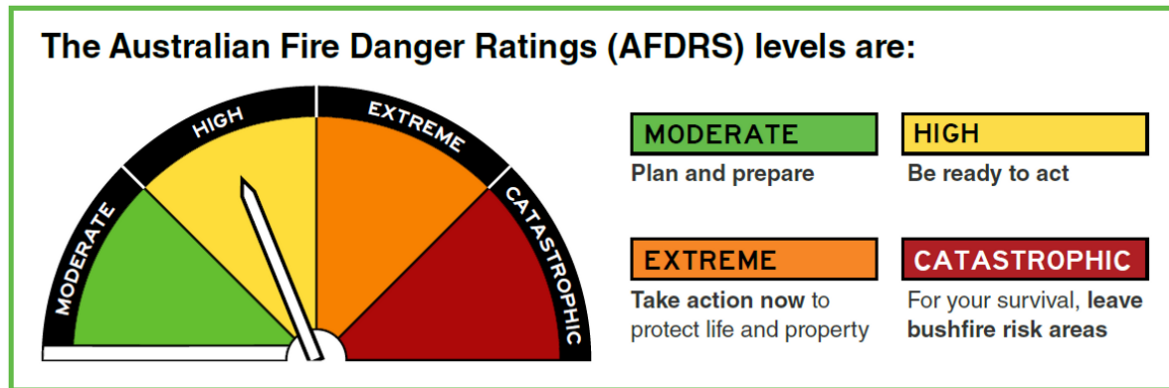
As our school is on the ‘Bushfire At Risk Register’ (BARR), we are mandated to close on all days forecasted by the Bureau of Meteorology to be **Catastrophic Fire District Rating (FDR) in our fire weather district**. We must then also cancel all our bus routes. (Catastrophic was previously known as Code Red)

OUR DESIGNATED FIRE WEATHER DISTRICT

Belgrave Heights is located in the Central Fire District.

FIRE DANGER RATINGS

The current fire danger rating system has four levels with action-oriented messages to encourage people to take action to protect themselves and others in the face of bushfire risks. These are the ratings that also guide the school.



Catastrophic FDR is the highest level of fire danger. These are the most dangerous conditions for a fire and if a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost. Catastrophic FDR days will be forecast for the whole of a fire weather district.

CATASTROPHIC FIRE RATING PROCEDURE

The School will be advised by external authorities of the potential for Catastrophic FDR conditions through the Bureau of Meteorology forecasts. When this needs to happen, they will:

- wherever possible, provide schools and early childhood services with 4 to 7 days' notice of a possible Catastrophic FDR day closure to enable schools to forewarn their school and parent/carer community
- confirm the final decision to close a school by 1pm the day before the Catastrophic FDR day closure.

Schools and early childhood services listed on the BARR are rated according to their level of bushfire risk, as either Category 1, 2 or 3, with Category 1 having the highest bushfire risk profile.

OUR BUSHFIRE RISK CATEGORY

Our school is currently rated as Category 3. This rating is determined by external organisations that consider our site, our terrain, our bushfire management overlay and the Victorian Fire Register. The rating is reviewed annually.

TOTAL FIRE BAN DAYS

Total Fire Ban days are not instantly categorised as Catastrophic. The school will continue to operate on days of Total Fire Ban, unless advised otherwise.

FURTHER COMPLIANCE

As a registered school, we must also comply with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Guidelines on Bushfire Preparedness. Our school was audited in 2017 and 2022 and was found to be compliant with these guidelines and to have all the necessary measures in place.

Our local police station keeps on hand a copy of our Emergency Management Plan, which provides Emergency Services with the layout of our school, so they can quickly identify and navigate buildings.

In the event of a bushfire starting during a school day, when the school has not received a 'State Alert', or message from Local Fire Authorities, the Principal will communicate with Local Fire Authorities to seek direction and instruction, which would then be carried out by the school.

COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES DURING EMERGENCIES

The School will provide parents with as much information as practical and possible during the time of an emergency using its website and the Flexischools app. Although we will use the available SMS service, delivery of these messages cannot be guaranteed and may not always reach families instantly, so we encourage all families to ensure they have access to Flexischools. This would be particularly true in case of a power outage, as it becomes the School's only available form of communication.

For further information please click on the links below:

- [Bureau of Meteorology Fire Weather Services](#)
- [Australian Fire Danger Rating System FAQs](#)
- [CFA Fire Danger Ratings Information](#)