

Planned closure of schools

Launching Place Primary School is a BARR School.



Schools and children's services including outside-school-hours-care services listed on the Bushfire At Risk Register (BARR) will be closed on days when the Fire Danger Rating is determined by the Emergency Management Commissioner as being **Code Red**.

How will I be advised of a planned closure?

- Where possible, the forecasting of a Code Red day will provide up to 4 days notice of a planned closure (including warnings about cancelling, changing, rescheduling or recalling off-site activities, such as camps and excursions), as well as information about cancellations of school bus routes.
- You will be advised by email **and** letter sent home from school – you can also check for updates at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/pages/closures.aspx>
- You should expect that, in some instances, fewer than 4 days notice may be given.
- The final decision to close will be confirmed no later than 1.00 pm the day before the potential closure by the Emergency Management Commissioner.
- Once the decision to close is made, this will not change – regardless of changes in weather forecast – this will help limit confusion and provide time for you to make alternative care arrangements for your children.

What can you do?

- **Make sure** your family's bushfire survival plan is up-to-date, including how your child will be cared for when their school or childcare service is closed due to threat of fire. Your child should not be left unattended.
- **Make sure** we have your current contact details, including mobile phone number.
- **Keep in touch** with us – read newsletters, check websites, talk to your child's teacher and other parents.
- **Understand** our Emergency Management Plan.

- **Talk to your child** about bushfires and your family's bushfire survival plan.
- **Talk to us** – your principal, teacher or school council representative, if you have any concerns.

Frequently asked questions and answers

Q. When the school is closed, will any staff remain on-site?

No. The safety of staff and students is our main priority and no staff will remain on-site.

Q. What happens if the forecast improves?

The final decision to pre-emptively close a school will be made at 1.00 pm the day prior to the planned closure. Any improvements in the weather forecast after this time will not change the decision to close – this will help limit confusion and provide time for parents to make alternative care arrangements for your children.

Q. Is it likely that schools will be closed for consecutive days? If yes, how will parents be advised?

It is possible that schools will be closed for consecutive days. If this occurs, we will endeavour to contact you. However as we are on the Bushfire At-Risk Register, our school will be closed on all days determined Code Red. You should also check the Department's website for updates – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/pages/closures.aspx>

Q. If I'm concerned about the risk of fires, can I keep my child away from school, even if the school remains open?

Yes. If your family decides to enact its bushfire survival plan, the most appropriate place for your child may be with you and your family, and not at school. You should advise your school as soon as possible of your child's absence.

Q. On average how many days each bushfire season does the government predict that schools will need to close?

While we cannot predict the exact number of days, it should be noted that there has not been a determined Code Red day since January 2010.

For more information go to:

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

Additional resources:

Country Fire Authority – www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Fire Ready Kit information is available at: <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/fire-ready-kit/>

For up to date information on emergencies and incidents:

<https://emergency.vic.gov.au>

Facebook facebook.com/cfavic

Twitter twitter.com/CFA_Updates

ABC local radio, Sky News and other emergency broadcasters

VicEmergency Hotline (1800 226 226)