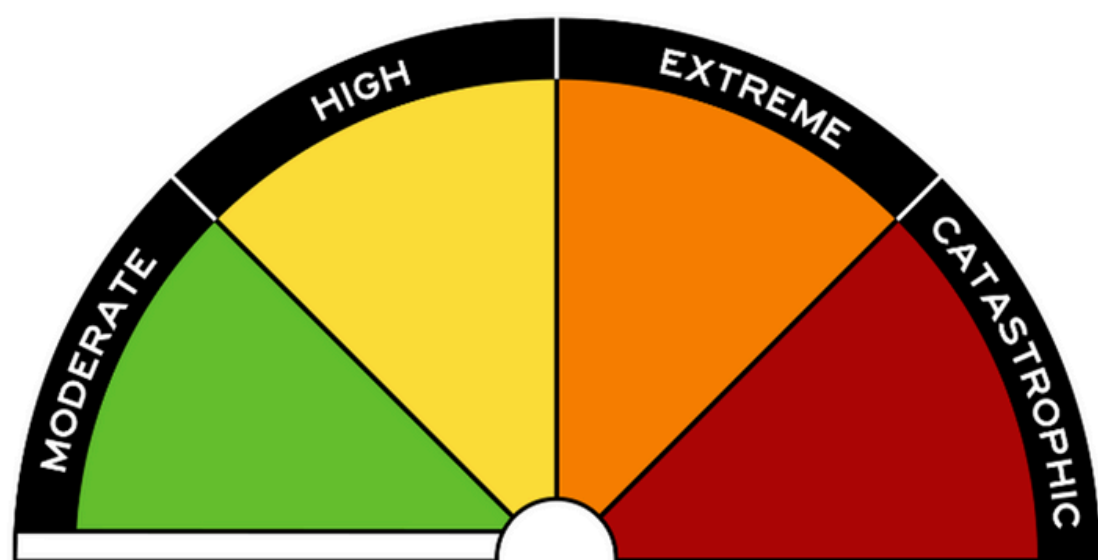


BUSHFIRE Preparedness



The guidelines have recently been updated to reflect the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System



Catastrophic

For your survival,
leave bush fire risk
areas

Extreme

Take action now to
protect your life and
property

High

Be ready to act

Moderate

Plan and prepare

Our school's fire risk and actions

Our school is a Category 4 School.

We will close on a day forecasted as a **Catastrophic fire danger rating** in the **South West** fire district.

All school bus routes that travel through a Catastrophic fire district will be cancelled.

How will you be advised

School closure for a Catastrophic fire danger day will be advised via Compass.

As much advance notice as possible will be provided to families based on the BOM forecast and messaging from the emergency sector.

Please be aware that the forecast will not be confirmed until closer to the day.



Schools in Category 4 Bushfire At-Risk List

School preparations for the bushfire season

Each year, we undertake a range of activities to ensure the safety of our school and to prepare for bushfires and grassfires.

An important part of this process is communicating to parents what will happen when certain fire danger ratings are issued to help ensure the safety of students and staff.



Our school has been identified as being at risk of bushfire or grassfire and is a **Category 4 school.**

Our school will **close** on a day forecasted as **Catastrophic fire danger rating** in **South West fire district**.

Closure of the school due to a Catastrophic fire danger rating will be enacted when the Bureau of Meteorology forecast and related public safety messaging are confirmed. Due to uncertainties in the forecast, the timing of this confirmation may vary. Information regarding potential or confirmed Catastrophic fire danger days will be communicated to you by **Compass notification and email**.

It is also important to be aware that:

- No one will be on site on days where the school is closed due to a forecast Catastrophic day.
- All bus routes that travel through the Catastrophic area will be cancelled.
- School camps will be cancelled if a Catastrophic fire danger rating day is forecast for fire weather district in which the camp is located, or if the travel involves passing through areas that have Catastrophic fire danger.

As part of preparing our school for the fire season, we are updating our Emergency Management Plan and prioritising any maintenance works that may assist in preparing for the threat of fire.

What can families and the school community do to help us prepare?

- Ensure we have your current contact details, including your mobile phone numbers.
- Keep in touch with us by reading our newsletters, checking our website www.apollobayp12.vic.edu.au or contacting the general office with any questions about our Emergency Management Plan.
- Make sure your family's bushfire survival plan is up-to-date and includes alternative care arrangements if our school is closed due to Catastrophic fire danger. Further information can be found on the [CFA's website](#).
- Action your family's bushfire survival plan if your own triggers are met. Our school community may be spread out across many areas and some families may be at higher risk than others. Your family's safety is critical, so please let us know if you are actioning your bushfire survival plan and if your children will be absent on these days.
- If your child is old enough, talk to [them about bushfires](#) and your family's bushfire survival plan.

Families are encouraged to action their [Bushfire Survival Plan](#) on Catastrophic fire danger rating days in their district. The safest option is to leave the night before or early on the morning of the Catastrophic day. **On such days, children should never be left at home alone or in the care of older children.**

You can find more information on emergencies, warnings and preparedness actions here:

- VicEmergency app – that can be downloaded on your android and iOS mobile devices
- VicEmergency Hotline (1800 226 226)
- Website <https://emergency.vic.gov.au>
- Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/vicemergency>)
- Twitter (<https://twitter.com/vicemergency>)
- ABC local radio, Sky News and other emergency broadcasters

The CFA also has a variety of [resources and information](#) available:

- [Plan and Prepare](#) – CFA Planning and preparation guide.
- [Your Guide to Survival](#) – this guide provides essential information aimed at anyone who lives, works or travels in Victoria so that they are prepared for the summer fire season.
- [Fire Ready Kit](#) – designed to help you plan for survival, beginning with the basics of preparing before the fire season, through to planning what to do if fire is in your area and you cannot leave.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the department's policy?

The Department of Education annually assesses the fire risk of all schools and early childhood services with the support of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). They are allocated a category of risk (categories 0 to 6). Schools and services that are Categories 0-3 are published on the [Bushfire At-Risk Register \(BARR\)](#). Schools at some risk of bushfire and grassfire are published on the [Category 4 List](#).

The department's [Bushfire and Grassfire Preparedness Policy](#) requires all schools and early childhood services on the BARR and the Category 4 List to close when a Catastrophic fire danger rating day is forecast in their fire weather district. All school bus routes which travel in or through a district with Catastrophic fire danger must also be cancelled.

The policy also requires that schools at the highest risk of bushfire (those in Categories 0, 1 and 2 of the Bushfire At-Risk Register) enact pre-emptive action plans based on the fire danger forecast for their Local Government Area (LGA).

Who issues fire danger forecasts?

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) provides public fire danger rating forecasts each day of the fire danger period using fire weather district areas. In Victoria, there are 9 fire weather districts, which are based on Local Government Area boundaries.

The department uses these forecasts when supporting schools to enact their pre-emptive bushfire actions plans.

Ensuring our school is bushfire ready

The new Australian
Fire Danger Rating
System is now
in place.

www.cfa.vic.gov.au/afdrs



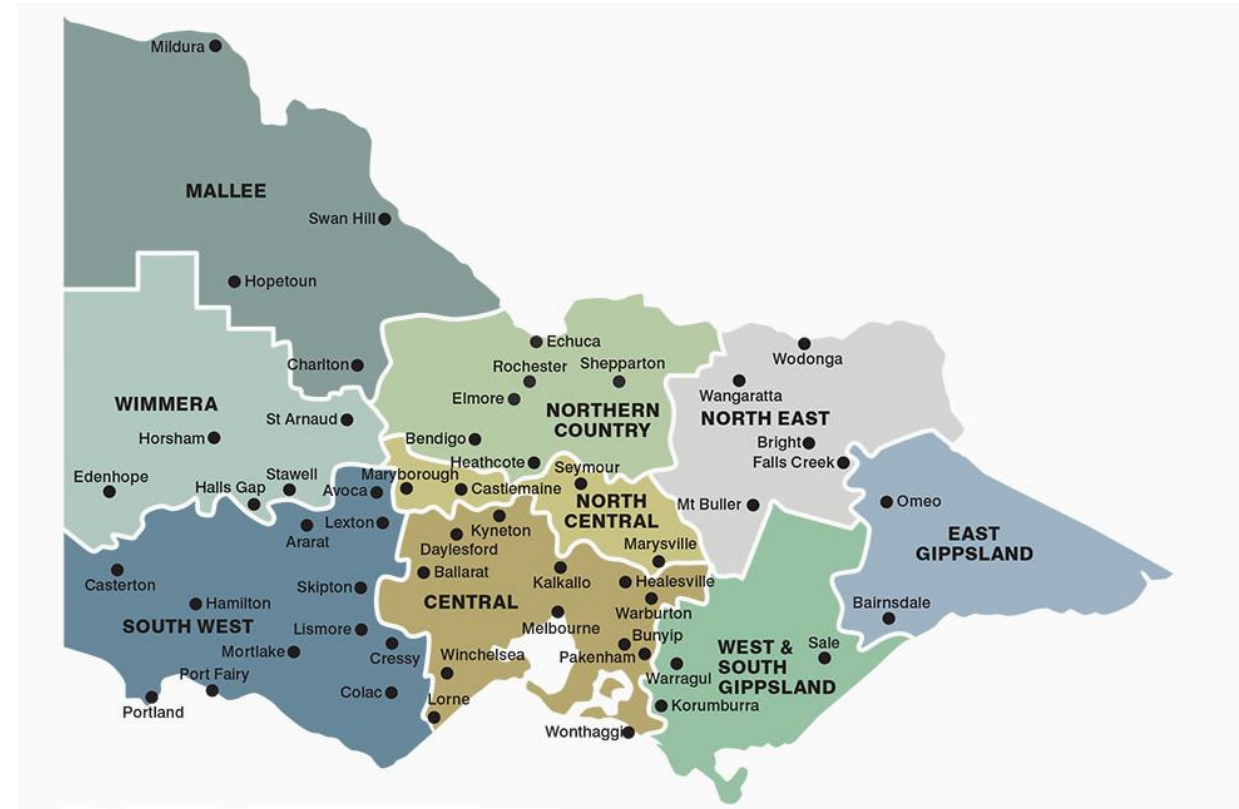
Presentation Overview

1. Forecasts and general bushfire information
2. Our fire risk and actions
3. How our school has prepared for the fire season
4. What can you do to prepare
5. Frequently asked questions
6. Where to find more information

Forecasts and general bushfire information

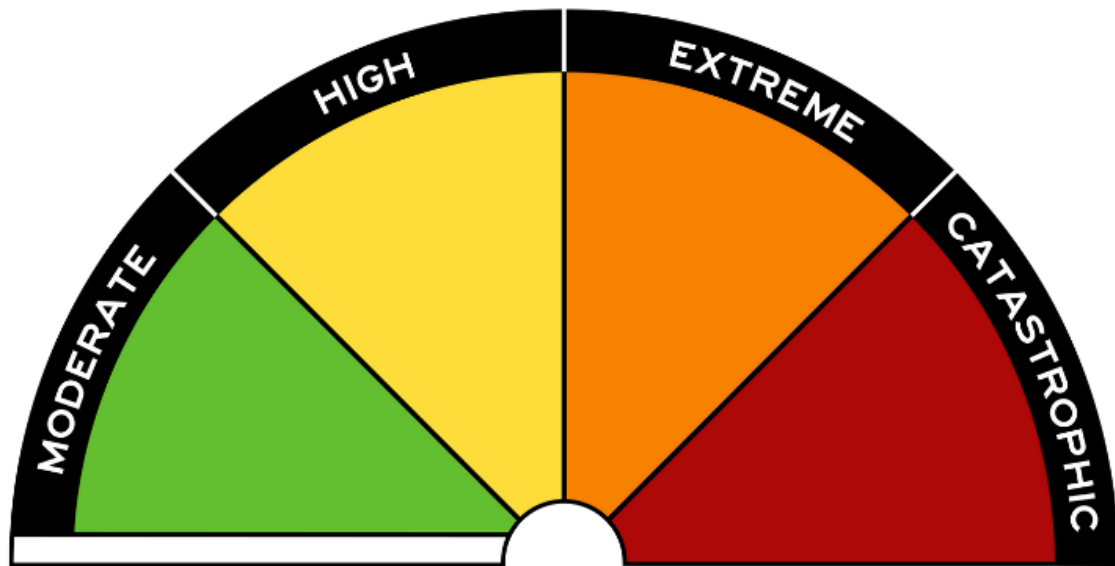
Understanding fire danger forecasts

- Fire danger ratings (FDRs) provide information about the potential level of danger should a bushfire start.
- FDRs are calculated by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) using a combination of weather forecasting and information about vegetation in the landscape that could fuel a fire.
- Victoria has 9 fire weather districts, which are based on municipal council boundaries. Our school is in the **South West** fire weather district.
- The BoM will publish the fire danger rating 4-day forecast on their website during the fire season, but these forecasts are subject to change.



Understanding fire risk and fire danger ratings

- The ratings provide information so that people can take action to protect themselves and others from the potentially dangerous impacts of bushfires.
- It is important, especially during the fire season, to stay up to date with conditions, monitor your surroundings and tune in to official sources for warnings.
- Since the 2022-23 fire season, Victoria uses the Australian Fire Danger Rating System which has 4 ratings; Moderate, High, Extreme and Catastrophic.



Catastrophic

For your survival,
leave bush fire risk areas

Extreme

Take action now to protect your life and property

High

Be ready to act

Moderate

Plan and prepare

On **No Rating** days, no action is required because the risk of a dangerous fire is very low.

The Bushfire At-Risk Register and Category 4

The Department of Education worked with the CSIRO to develop the *Victorian Education Facilities Fire Risk Methodology*, which is used to assess the fire risk of all early childhood and school education facilities each year.

- **The Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR)**

The schools and facilities in Categories 0-3 are at the highest risk of being impacted by fire in the landscape and are included on the BARR. The BARR functions as a triaged risk register to support preparation for, and response to, the annual fire season.

- **Category 4**

Schools and facilities that are at some risk of fire pre-emptively close in response to days of Catastrophic fire risk. These sites are at a lower level of risk than those on the BARR.

Our school is a Category 4 school.

Our school's fire risk and actions

Our fire risk and actions

Our school is a Category 4 School.

We will **close** on a day forecasted as a **Catastrophic** fire danger rating in the **South West** fire district.

All school bus routes that travel through a **Catastrophic** fire district will be cancelled.

How will you be advised?

- If our school needs to **close on a Catastrophic fire danger day for Category 4**, we will advise you via **Compass**.
- We will try to provide you with advance notice of possible **Catastrophic** days when we can. Please be aware that the forecast will not be confirmed until closer to the day.

Responding to the advice

- Our families play an important role in enacting our bushfire plans.
- Monitor your communications during the fire season to stay up to date. Follow the instructions provided by the school in these communications.
- Closure of the school due to a **Catastrophic** fire danger rating will be enacted when the BOM forecast and related public safety messaging are confirmed. Due to uncertainties in the forecast, the timing of this confirmation may vary.
- Find out more - information on school closure and school bus service cancellations, including advice on re-opening is available from the [department's website](#).

Fire in the landscape

- The school has an Emergency Management Plan. This plan accounts for a range of incidents including fires. If there is a fire in the landscape, we will initiate that plan, and seek advice from emergency services for the safest actions for the school.
- If our Emergency Management Plan is activated, we let you know via **Compass**.
- The Department of Education supports us to monitor warnings and weather conditions, and will work with emergency services to provide us with advice to keep our school safe.
- We may ask for you to collect your children. In other circumstances, we may ask that you do not collect your children, as this may place you and them in greater danger.
- **All decisions will prioritise the safety of our students and will be informed by advice by the emergency services.**

Preparing for the fire season

What can you do to prepare

- **Make sure** you understand the fire danger for our area.
- **Review and update** your family's bushfire survival plan, including how your child will be cared for when the school or childcare service is closed due to threat of fire. **Your child should not be left unattended.**
- **Check** that we have your current contact details, including mobile phone number.
- **Keep in touch** with us by reading our newsletters, checking emails and Compass, talking to your child's teacher and to others in our school community.
- **Understand** our Emergency Management Plan and your role in keeping the school, its students and staff safe.
- **Talk to your child** about bushfires and your family's bushfire survival plan.
- **Talk to us** including our principal, teachers or school council representatives if you have any concerns.

Make a bushfire plan

- The Country Fire Authority (CFA) provides great resources to support you and your family to plan ahead for the fire season.
- Remember that you don't have to live in the country to be at risk of fire.
- As a member of our school community, we recommend thinking about how you will plan ahead for the fire season.
- Taking steps to get prepared before the fire season means you know what to do when you're at risk of fire.
- Visit Your Bushfire Plan to use the CFA's resources at:
<https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/before-and-during-a-fire/your-bushfire-plan>

Frequently asked questions

Frequently asked questions

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.

Talk to us about your family's bushfire plan ahead of the fire season. You should also advise the school as soon as possible of your child's absence if your plan is enacted.

When will we be informed about Catastrophic fire danger day closures?

Fire danger forecasts are issued twice daily and can change with updated information. For the safety of our school community, the decision to enact our plan will depend on the latest BOM forecast and public messaging from the emergency sector.

We will confirm the decision as soon in advance as possible. Schools will also be provided with heads-up notices if it looks like a Catastrophic rating is possible.

Frequently asked questions

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, and all other visitors and contractors will also not be allowed on site.

Is it possible that schools will be closed for consecutive days?

If yes, how will parents be advised?

It is possible that our school will be closed for consecutive days. If this occurs, keep up to date via our communications on Compass.

We will be closed on **all** forecast Catastrophic days.

In addition to our communications, you can also check the Department's website for updates.

Where to find more information



Department
of Education

Further information

The Department of Education:

The department's **Bushfire and Grassfire Preparedness Policy** guides our activities.

It is available online at: [Bushfire and Grassfire Preparedness: Policy | education.vic.gov.au](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/bushfire-and-grassfire-preparedness-policy)

Country Fire Authority (CFA):

- [Plan & Prepare | CFA \(Country Fire Authority\)](#)
- [Your Guide to Survival | CFA \(Country Fire Authority\)](#)
- [Fire Ready Kit | CFA \(Country Fire Authority\)](#)

Other sources:

- **VicEmergency** is a great source for information, advice and warnings. You can access it via:
 - The VicEmergency app – that can be downloaded on your android and iOS mobile devices
 - Website - <https://emergency.vic.gov.au>
 - VicEmergency Hotline -1800 226 226
 - Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/vicemergency>
 - Twitter - <https://twitter.com/vicemergency>
- Tune into your **emergency broadcasters** such as the ABC local radio, Sky News and others.

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