



School preparedness and pre-emptive actions for the bushfire season

Fire danger ratings indicate how dangerous a fire would be if one started in those conditions and provide clear direction on the safest options for preserving life. They can be a trigger for action in

community and for school and household level fire plans.

Schools and children's services listed on the Department of Education and Training's Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) and those at some lower risk of bushfire or grassfire on the Category 4 list will be closed when a Catastrophic fire danger rating day is forecast in their Bureau of Meteorology district.

Schools and early childhood services listed on the Department of Education and Training's Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) and those at lower risk of bushfire or grassfire on the Category 4 list take pre-emptive actions on elevated fire danger days to minimise the risk of being caught in a fire in these conditions. The category of risk (per the BARR or Category 4 list) determines the actions that the school or early childhood service will need to take on days of elevated fire danger.

Our school has been identified as being one of these schools at high bushfire or grassfire risk and is listed on the Bushfire at Risk Register (BARR) / a category 3 school.

Our school will close on a day forecasted as a **Catastrophic fire danger rating** in the **Wimmera weather district**.

The department will advise our school of the potential for a **Catastrophic fire danger rating** as information becomes available, however the pre-emptive closure will be **confirmed by 1pm the day prior to Catastrophic fire danger day**.

Fire danger ratings are forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology up to four days in advance. Should a Catastrophic day be forecast, we will notify you of the potential closure by an email or hard copy letter and a phone call or message. Closure of the school due to a forecast Catastrophic day will be confirmed on the day prior and 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 Catastrophic day.
- Out-of-school-hours care will also be cancelled on these days.
- School camps will be cancelled if a Catastrophic fire danger rating day is forecast for the Bureau of Meteorology district in which the camp is located, or if the travel involves passing through areas that have Catastrophic fire danger.
- All bus routes that travel through the Catastrophic area will be cancelled.

Families are encouraged to enact their Bushfire Survival Plan on Catastrophic fire danger rating days.

On such days, children should never be left at home alone or in the care of older children.

For those of us living in a bushfire prone area, the Country Fire Authority (CFA) advises that when Catastrophic days are forecast, the safest option is to leave the night before or early on the morning of the Catastrophic day.

As part of preparing our school for potential hazards such as fire, we have updated and completed our Emergency Management Plan and reprioritised any maintenance works that may assist in preparing for the threat of fire and cleared our facility's grounds and gutters].

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 undertaking remote and flexible learning and/or closed due to elevated fire danger or a Catastrophic fire forecast. Further information can be found on the [CFA's website](#).