

Bushfire Response Information

Preparedness

MDCS

MDCS has a Critical Incident Management Plan that guides our response to incidents such as, but not limited to, bushfires. The Critical Incident Management Plan has been developed in consultation with and/or using resources provided by; Independent Schools Victoria, the Department of Education, the CFA and the Shire of Yarra Ranges. With respect to the school's bushfire preparedness we have a very good water supply feeding our fire hose reels around the property, as well as 190,000 litres in water tanks beneath and near the rotunda (adjacent to the bus car park) specifically for firefighting and a storm water dam adjacent to the school exit.

MDCS Families

It is important to familiarise yourself with the Fire Danger Index used in Victoria as part of your fire preparedness for this fire season.

It is also very important that you update the school on any changes to your contact details as they occur so that you can be contacted in the event of an emergency event. More information on bushfire preparedness is available at the websites of the CFA and the Vic Emergency website.



[Your Guide to Survival | CFA \(Country Fire Authority\)](#)
[Prepare and Get Ready - VicEmergency](#)

Code Red Fire Risk

MDCS

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 listed on the DET Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) will be closed when a Code Red fire danger rating day is determined in their Bureau of Meteorology district. **Our school has been identified as being one of those at high bushfire risk and is listed on the BARR.**

Where possible, we will provide parents with up to four days' notice of a potential Code Red day closure by letter and via our text messaging service. A Code Red day will be determined by the Emergency Management Commissioner no later than 1.00 pm the day before the potential closure. Once we are advised of the confirmation of the Code Red day, we will provide you with advice before the end of the school day, again via text message.

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.

On Code Red Days:

- Families in fire prone areas should enact their fire plans. On such days children should never be left at home or in the care of older children.
- When MDCS is closed, there will be no one present at school, so please do not send children or contact the school; plan ahead for their supervision.
- No MDCS buses will run on Code Red days. School camps will be cancelled if a Code Red fire danger rating day is determined for the Bureau of Meteorology district in which the camp is located.



Unpredicted Fire Risk

MDCS

If a **bushfire** occurs **unexpectedly** and threatens the school we have several contingencies:

- If there is sufficient warning, and it is safe to do so, students and teachers will be relocated/evacuated to a safe place/relief centre from which students can be collected. Where this safe place is depends on the direction of the fire and conditions at the time. An evacuation location will be determined based on the best information that can be obtained from the Emergency Service agencies such as the CFA, Police and Shire of Yarra Ranges. After students are relocated we will contact you via text message.
- If there is not enough warning time to evacuate, in accordance with the Critical Incident Management Plan, students will be taken into the building/s that we have assessed as the safest. The Multipurpose Room (beneath the Library) being in the centre of the school property and being a concrete and brick structure is deemed the MDCS fire refuge.

MDCS families

In the event of an immediate unexpected bushfire threat, please do not come and collect children. This will cause traffic chaos and prevent the rapid evacuation of all children, and may place your own life at risk. It can also hamper our ability to safely keep an account of all students. In any event, police may prevent your access. If you do come (against our advice) and insist on removing your child/ren, you will be permitted to do so provided you sign out the child/ren. Only parents or legal guardians will be able to collect children in these circumstances (we will not release any child to another person).

Please do not call school; be patient. Staff will be dealing with the emergency and their priority will be the safety of the students. You will be contacted as soon as practically possible via our text messaging service

For up-to-date information on this year's fire season see:

- [Incidents and Warnings - VicEmergency](#)
- Facebook [CFA \(Country Fire Authority\) | Facebook](#)
- Twitter [cfa_updates \(@CFA Updates\) / Twitter](#)
- ABC local radio, Sky News and other emergency broadcasters
- VicEmergency Hotline (1800 226 226)