



IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

RE: CODE RED DAYS

Schools identified as being at the greatest risk of bushfires will be pre-emptively closed on days determined by the Emergency Management Commissioner as having a Code Red Fire Danger Rating. The Department's priority is the safety of its staff, students and children. On a Code Red day all facilities on the Department's Bushfire At-Risk Register will be closed.

Wedderburn College is included on the Bushfire At-Risk Register and therefore the College will be closed on days determined by fire authorities to be Code Red.

The school follows the Department of Education and Training (DET) procedures for the bushfire season and stays up to date with the revisions of the Bushfire ratings, procedures and advice. Fire danger ratings and warnings are used in Victoria to provide clear direction on the safest options for preserving life.

It is intended that families will be provided with as much notice as possible of a planned closure. However, if unexpected weather patterns are experienced, closures may happen at short notice. The final decision to close our school will be confirmed no later than 1.00pm the day before the planned closure. The school will communicate the expected closure to our school community. Additional information will also be published on the Department of Education and Training website.

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

If the Bureau of Meteorology downgrades the risk forecast in the days leading-up to a planned closure, the closure may be cancelled and the school will be allowed to remain open. The final decision to pre-emptively close a school or children's service will be confirmed no later than 1.00pm the day before the planned closure. Once the decision to close has been confirmed, there will be no change – regardless of improvements to the weather conditions the following afternoon or overnight. This will help limit confusion and provide time for parents and guardians to make alternative care arrangements for their children.

- No staff will be on site on days when the school is closed by the risk of fire.
- School camps will be cancelled if the area where the camp is taking place is at risk.
- There may also be changes to school bus routes. Depending on routes, this may also occur on days when the school is not closed.

On these Code Red days families are encouraged to enact their Bushfire Survival Plan – **on such days, children should never be left at home unattended or in the care of older children.**

For those of us living in a bushfire-prone area, the safest option when a Code Red day is declared may be to leave the night before, or early in the morning of the Code Red day.

What can parents do?

- Make sure your family's Bushfire Survival Plan is up-to-date and includes alternative care arrangements for your children in the event that our school is closed.
- Ensure we have your current contact details, including your mobile phone numbers. Keep in touch with us by reading our newsletters, by checking our website: <http://www.wedderburn-college.vic.edu.au>
- Most importantly at this time of year, if you're planning a holiday or short stay in the bush or in a coastal area, you should check warnings in advance of travel and remain vigilant during your stay.
- If your child is old enough, talk to them about bushfires and your family's Bushfire Survival Plan.

Margaret-Anne Wright
Principal
Wedderburn College