

# Bushfire Preparedness Procedures for Education Facilities



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Bushfire preparedness procedures .....	3
<b>Forecasting and Fire Danger Ratings</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Pre-emptive actions .....	5
Fire Danger Ratings .....	6
<b>Understanding your type of fire risk</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Fire risk category and pre-emptive actions</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Know your pre-emptive actions .....	9
<b>Response: Fire in the Landscape</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Triggers for action .....	10
Immediate action and seeking advice .....	11
Actions for your school or service when it is within a VicEmergency warning area.....	11
Actions for your school to Shelter-in-Place.....	12
<b>Resources:</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Pre-season bushfire preparedness for schools</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Pre-season preparedness for all schools in Categories 0-3 (BARR) and Category 4 .....	15
Development of pre-emptive action plan (relocation, learning from home or closure) for elevated fire danger ratings for schools in Categories 0, 1 and 2.....	16
Develop your plan – pre-emptive relocation .....	16
Develop your plan – learning from home.....	17
Develop your plan – pre-emptive closure .....	17
<b>Pre-emptive school relocation plan</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Pre-emptive school learning from home plan</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Pre-emptive school closure plan</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Enacting your school’s pre-emptive action plan</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Enacting your school’s Catastrophic FDR closure</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Enacting your early childhood service Catastrophic FDR closure</b> .....	<b>32</b>

© State of Victoria (Department of Education) 2023



Bushfire Preparedness Procedures for Education Facilities is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. You are free to re-use the work under that licence, on the condition that you credit the State of Victoria (Department of Education), indicate if changes were made and comply with the other licence terms, see: [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

The licence does not apply to:

- any images, photographs, trademarks or branding, including the Victorian Government logo and the DE logo; and
- content supplied by third parties.

Copyright queries may be directed to [copyright@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:copyright@education.vic.gov.au)



Department  
of Education

# Introduction

**These procedures outline the actions that education facilities assessed to be at risk from bushfire need to take in preparation for, and in the event of, a day of forecasted elevated fire danger.**

Fire behaviour in Victoria is classified by are seven different fire behaviour models, which refer to the different types of fire fuels available across the Victorian landscape. These fire fuels include forest, grassland, grassy woodland, spinifex, shrubland, mallee heath, pine and non-combustible fuels. In these procedures, the term **bushfire** will be used more broadly to refer to all fires across these different fuel types. Using the term bushfire in this way helps to differentiate fires in the landscape from structural and industrial fires and is standard in emergency management.

The Department of Education (the department) has worked with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) to develop the Victorian Education Facilities Fire Risk Methodology, which is used by the department to annually assess the fire risk of early childhood and school education facilities. All early childhood and school education facilities are assessed and categorised into fire risk categories.

The schools and early childhood service facilities in Categories 0-3 are at the highest risk of being impacted by fire in the landscape and are included on the Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR). The BARR functions as a triaged risk register to support preparation for, and response to, the annual fire season. This includes enacting pre-planned relocations and closures based on risk category on days of forecasted elevated fire danger. These procedures support schools and facilities on the BARR to make targeted preparations for the fire season, with increased preparations for higher risk categories.

In 2019, it was determined that schools and facilities that were at some risk of fire, those in Category 4, would need to pre-emptively close in response to days of catastrophic fire risk. These schools and facilities are listed in the separate Category 4 list, which reflects the lower level of risk at these sites aligning with lower amounts of preparation required for the fire season.

These procedures have been updated in line with the implementation of the Australian Fire Danger Ratings System in Victoria and replace the department's previous *Bushfire preparedness relocation and closure procedures* and *Code Red Day pre-emptive closures policy and procedures*.

## Bushfire preparedness procedures

The department has developed bushfire preparedness procedures which can be referenced by all education facilities in Victoria and provide an overview of key information and actions to prepare for and respond to bushfires.

There are specific actions for schools and early childhood services in Categories 0-3, listed on the BARR and Category 4, listed on the Category 4 list. Schools and services not included on the BARR or Category 4 list may also refer to these procedures in their emergency management planning.

Bushfire safety is a shared responsibility between fire services, emergency management agencies, state and local government, communities, households and individuals. The department's procedures for pre-emptive action on forecasted elevated Fire Danger Rating (FDR) days have been developed with advice and consultation from partners in the emergency management sector and in collaboration with school and service communities.

# Forecasting and Fire Danger Ratings

## Forecasting fire danger

In Australia, the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) provides fire weather services which are products used by fire and emergency services agencies and other government agencies, including the department, to understand when weather conditions are likely to be dangerous for bushfires.

These products are developed by assessing weather and other environmental conditions such as temperature, wind and fuel. Fire danger forecasts tell us how dangerous a fire is likely to be if it starts, and how difficult it might be to put the fire out. The forecasts do not tell us how likely it is that a fire will start.

The BoM works closely with emergency services to provide information, and also makes some information available directly to the community via their website. When the BoM issues public fire danger rating forecasts or fire weather warnings, they use Fire Weather Forecast Areas boundaries. In Victoria, there are 9 Fire Weather Forecast Areas, also known as fire districts (Figure 1), which are based on municipal council boundaries:

1. Mallee
2. Wimmera
3. Northern Country
4. North East
5. East Gippsland
6. West and South Gippsland
7. Central
8. North Central
9. South Central

The district boundaries do not align with the department's regions. Please refer to the information provided by the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to [identify your fire district](#).

The BoM provide two fire forecasting products on their website:

- Fire Danger Rating Tables: Provides four days of forecast Fire Danger Ratings in a simple format for public awareness.
- Fire Weather Warning: Fire weather warnings are provided as part of standard BoM warnings and are issued to warn the community of an enhanced fire danger risk.

These products can provide education facilities with information about the fire danger of their wider area and are good for prior planning and situational awareness.

To support schools at the highest levels of risk from fire, making sure that disruptions to learning through relocations and closures only occur as necessary, the department works with emergency services to access more specific forecasting at the Local Government Area (LGA) level.

LGA level forecasts are what we use for schools in Categories 0, 1 and 2 to enact relocation and closure plans on days of **High** and **Extreme** forecasted FDR. LGA level forecasts are only available to emergency services and government agencies on an as-needed basis. Unlike the four-day forecasts available at the fire district level, LGA forecasts are for a smaller area and can take more time to produce, often the forecast is not available or confirmed until the day before a forecasted **High** and **Extreme** FDR in the LGA. For this reason, schools in Categories 0, 1 and 2 must be prepared before the fire season to enact relocation and closure plans on limited notice.



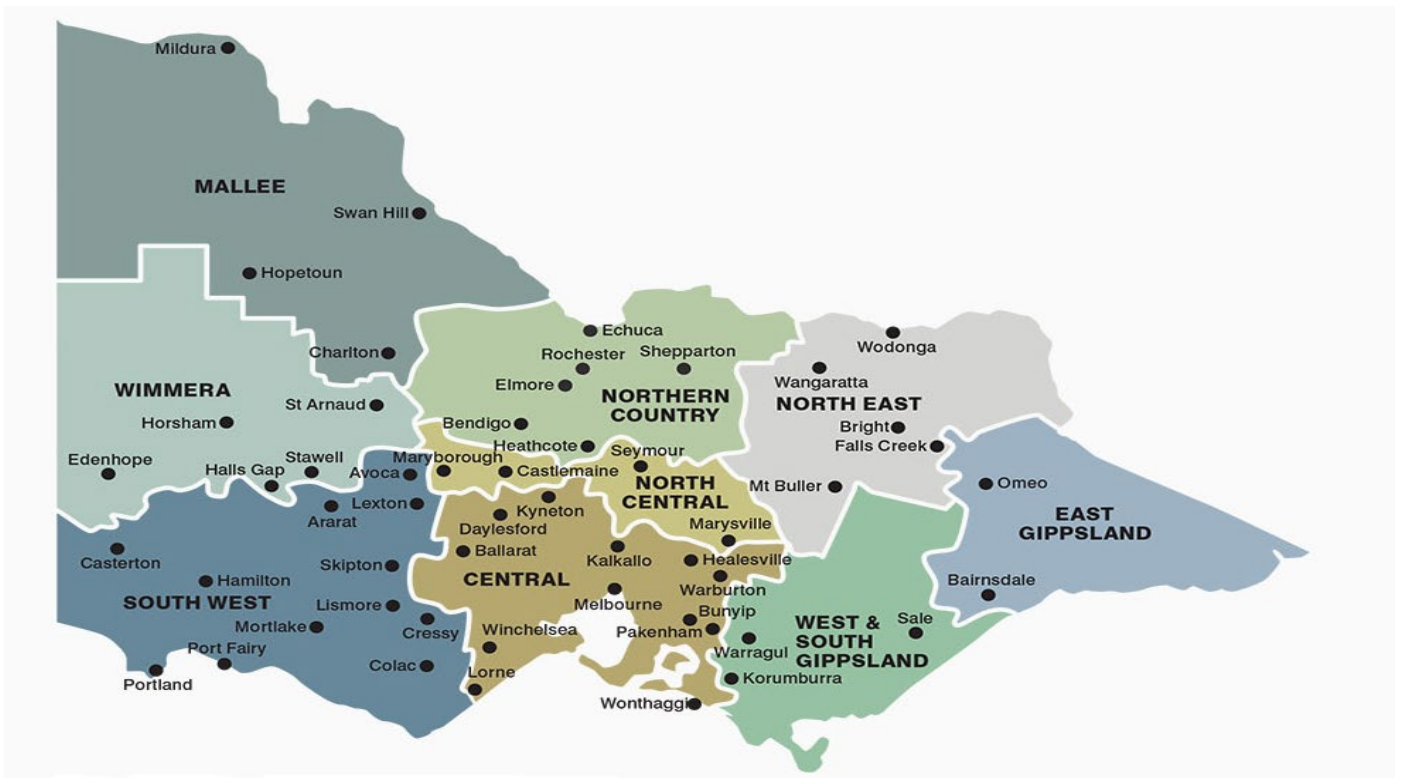


Figure 1: Map of Fire Districts, CFA 2022

This is also why the department uses the fire weather district forecast to enact the pre-emptive closure of all schools on the BARR and Category 4 list on a forecasted **Catastrophic FDR** day in the fire district.

You will find more information is provided within the procedures, see the key details summarised in the table below.

## Pre-emptive actions

Facility Category	Pre-emptive action (relocation, learning from home or closure)	Pre-emptive Closure on Catastrophic FDR
<b>Category 0 (BAAR)</b> At highest risk	Forecasted High FDR in LGA	<p style="text-align: center;">Site closed on forecasted Catastrophic FDR in fire district. No people on site, bus routes cancelled.</p>
<b>Category 1 (BAAR)</b>	Forecasted Extreme FDR in LGA	
<b>Category 2 (BARR)</b>	Forecasted Extreme FDR in LGA	
<b>Category 3 (BARR)</b> <b>Category 4</b>	Not applicable	

## Fire Danger Ratings

Fire danger ratings provide information about the potential level of danger should a bushfire start. The ratings provide information so that people can take action to protect themselves and others from the potentially dangerous impacts of bushfires. They are calculated by the BoM using a combination of weather forecasting and information about vegetation in the landscape that could fuel a fire.

Elevated fire danger ratings indicate that the conditions are dangerous and that there will be great consequences if a fire starts. Education facilities on the BARR and Category 4 list will be aware of what level of fire danger rating triggers their pre-emptive actions.

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.

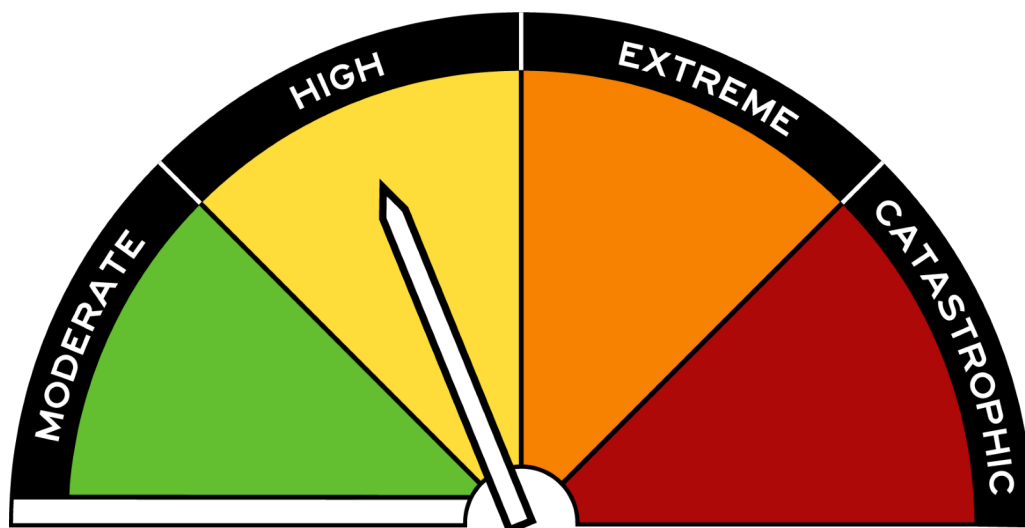
Regardless of the fire danger rating, if a fire starts near you, you must take action immediately to protect your life. Do not wait for a warning.

### Australian Fire Danger Rating System

In September 2022, Victoria implemented the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS). The AFDRS is a nationally consistent system for fire danger ratings based on the latest scientific research. It provides more accurate predictions for fire danger as well as clearer, simplified messaging for all communities.

From the 2022-23 fire season, the four AFDRS fire danger ratings will be used:

Figure 2: Australian Fire Danger Rating Device, AFAC, 2022



The table below outlines the four fire danger ratings, community messages and actions for education facilities:

Fire Danger Rating	Information and actions
<b>No rating</b>	Fires can still occur on these days however conditions are not considered to be dangerous.
<b>Moderate</b>	<p><b>Community Message: Plan and prepare.</b> Most fires can be controlled. Stay up to date with conditions and be ready to act if there is a fire in your local area.</p> <p><b>Education actions:</b> For all schools and early childhood services, be alert for fires in your area and decide in advance what your school or service will do if a fire starts. This should be part of your emergency management plan. For all schools and early childhood services, if there is a fire in the landscape, enact your emergency management plan and follow the advice of emergencies services.</p>
<b>High</b>	<p><b>Community Message: Be ready to act.</b> There's a heightened risk. Be alert for fires in your area.</p> <p><b>Education actions:</b> For schools in Category 0, enact your pre-emptive action plan. For all schools and early childhood services, be alert for fires in your area and decide in advance what your school or service will do if a fire starts. This should be part of your emergency management plan. For all schools and early childhood services, if there is a fire in the landscape, enact your emergency management plan and follow the advice of emergencies services.</p>
<b>Extreme</b>	<p><b>Community Message: Take action now to protect your life and property.</b> Fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous. Reconsider travel through bushfire risk areas.</p> <p><b>Education actions:</b> For schools in Categories 0-2, enact your pre-emptive action plan. Members of your school or service community may enact their own individual or family bushfire plans. For all schools and early childhood services, if there is a fire in the landscape, enact your emergency management plan and follow the advice of emergencies services.</p>
<b>Catastrophic</b>	<p><b>Community Message: For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas.</b> These are the most dangerous conditions for a fire. If a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost. Stay safe by going to a safer location early in the morning or the night before.</p> <p><b>Education actions:</b> All schools and early childhood services on the BARR and Category 4 list will close. Members of your school or service community may enact their own individual or family bushfire plans. For all schools and early childhood services, if there is a fire in the landscape, enact your emergency management plan and follow the advice of emergencies services.</p>

# Understanding your type of fire risk

A key factor in understanding your fire risk is to identify your local environment and the types of fire fuels in your area. This can have an impact on how fire will behave in the landscape. The CFA have a helpful resource in the [Fire Ready Kit](#) that you can refer to in order to better understand your risk.

## Fire risk category and pre-emptive actions

The department has worked with the CSIRO to develop a fire risk assessment methodology and system that categorises Victorian education facilities according to their risk from fire in the landscape. All schools and early childhood services in Victoria are annually assessed using this methodology.

The methodology provides a framework to assess the risk to an educational facility from bushfire. The risk is assessed by considering the potential building loss of the Shelter-in-Place (SIP) building, and adjusting the loss based on the building's compliance and its exposure to other assets. The risk categorisation also considers an estimate of the radiant heat exposure at the evacuation assembly point and along the egress route between the SIP and this area. The overall objective of using the methodology is to inform appropriate relocation triggers and to prioritise other mitigation strategies.

Using the methodology provides appropriate evidence-based rankings for Bushfire-At-Risk Register (BARR) categories. The rankings range from Category 0, at highest risk to Category 6, at lowest risk. Schools and early childhood services in Categories 0 to 4 are advised annually of their risk category, schools and services in Categories 5 and 6 are considered to be a negligible risk from bushfire and are not advised of their risk categories as they do not need to take any pre-emptive action. All schools should be aware of bushfire risks when conducting excursions in areas at risk of fire and ensure that they comply with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) [minimum standards and other requirements for schools](#).

Schools and early childhood service facilities in the highest risk categories (Category 0-3) are listed on the BARR. The category of school or service on the BARR determines the actions that the facility will need to take on days of elevated fire danger. These categorisations also enable the department to identify locations of highest risk and prioritise investment to reduce bushfire risk. Inclusion on the BARR is a trigger for schools to develop preparedness arrangements for pre-emptive actions (relocation, learning from home and closure) based on their level of risk.

In addition to high-risk facilities on the BARR, the department required schools and early childhood facilities that are at some risk of impact from fire in the landscape (Category 4) to take some pre-emptive action. Since 2019, the department has published a separate list of facilities in Category 4 alongside the BARR. As these facilities are not at the same level of risk, they do not need to complete preparedness activities to the same extent as facilities on the BARR, however as they are at some risk these facilities are required to close on days forecasted as having a Catastrophic FDR, which are days of the greatest danger.



## Know your pre-emptive actions

### Pre-emptive closure for schools in Categories 0 - 4

All school in Categories 0 – 4 will close on a day forecasted as **Catastrophic FDR** in their **fire district**.

Schools may begin to prepare for the possibility of pre-emptive closure up to 4 days before the forecasted **Catastrophic FDR** day as informed by the BoM forecast.

The department will advise impacted schools via phone and/or email of the potential for a **Catastrophic FDR** as information becomes available, however **the pre-emptive closure will be confirmed by 1pm the day prior to Catastrophic FDR day**.

Schools in categories 0-4 should ensure that they have communicated their fire risk assessment and requirement to close on a Catastrophic FDR day in the fire district with their school communities.

### Pre-emptive closure for early childhood services in Categories 0 - 4

All early childhood services in Categories 0 – 4 will close on a day forecasted as **Catastrophic FDR** in their **fire district**.

Services may begin to prepare for the possibility of pre-emptive closure up to 4 days before the forecasted **Catastrophic FDR** day as informed by the BoM forecast.

The department will advise impacted services via phone and/or email of the potential for a **Catastrophic FDR** as information becomes available, however **the pre-emptive closure will be confirmed by 1pm the day prior to Catastrophic FDR day**.

**Early childhood services that are co-located with a Category 0-2 school are strongly recommended to close on days of elevated fire danger where their collocated school has enacted their pre-emptive action plan.**

Early Childhood Services in categories 0-4 should ensure that they have communicated their fire risk assessment and requirement to close on a Catastrophic FDR day in the fire district with their service communities.

Early childhood services in Categories 0-2 are advised to maintain situational awareness of elevated fire danger days and enact appropriate measures in accordance with their own service policies and procedures.

### Pre-emptive action for schools in Category 1 and 2

**In addition to the above**, all schools in Categories 1 and 2 will enact their pre-emptive action plan (relocation, ~~remote~~-learning from home or closure) on a day forecasted as **Extreme FDR** in their **local government area (LGA)**.

Due to the nature of LGA forecast, the department will advise schools via phone and/or email of the potential for an **Extreme FDR** in their LGA as the information becomes available. **Impacted schools will be contacted via phone and/or email by 1pm the day before a forecasted Extreme FDR day in their LGA with advice to enact their pre-emptive action plan.**

Schools in categories 1 and 2 should ensure that they have communicated their fire risk assessment and planned pre-emptive action on an Extreme FDR day in their LGA with their school community.

It is also important for schools to be aware of individual and family bushfire plans and identify what staff members and students may not be attending a relocated school site or participating in flexible learning. It is recommended that schools confirm individual and family bushfire plans of their staff and school community before the fire season. Visit the CFA website for information on individual and family [bushfire plans](#).

## Pre-emptive action for schools in Category 1 and 2

**In addition to the above**, all schools in Category 0 will enact their pre-emptive relocation, ~~remote~~ learning [from home](#) or closure plan close on a day forecasted as **High or Extreme FDR** in their **local government area (LGA)**.

Due to the nature of LGA forecast, the department will advise schools via phone and/or email of the potential for a **High or Extreme FDR** in their LGA as the information becomes available. **Impacted schools will be contacted via phone and/or email by 1pm the day before a forecasted High or Extreme FDR day in their LGA with advice to enact their pre-emptive action plan.**

Schools in Category 0 should ensure that they have communicated their fire risk assessment and planned pre-emptive action on a High or Extreme FDR day in their LGA with their school community.

It is also important for schools to be aware of individual and family bushfire plans and identify what staff members and students may not be attending a relocated school site or participating in flexible learning. It is recommended that schools confirm individual and family bushfire plans of their staff and school community before the fire season.

## Response: Fire in the Landscape

**All schools, early childhood services and education facilities should consider their bushfire risk level in their emergency management planning.**

**The information below provides an overview of actions to be taken when a fire is in your local area.**

### Triggers for action

In your emergency management planning, your school or service should identify in advance what are your triggers for action in response to fire in your local landscape. You should agree and socialise these triggers for action before the commencement of the fire season.

This can be when:

- a. the fire is observable by sight,
- b. a fire is identified via the [VicEmergency application or website](#) within decided kilometre radius from your school and service (for most schools and services this will be two-five kilometres),
- c. there is an Advice, Watch and Act, Emergency Warning or Evacuation message that includes your site.

## Immediate action and seeking advice

If immediate emergency services assistance is required always call '000'.

1. Activate your emergency management plan and convene your school or service's Incident Management Team (IMT).
2. If your emergency management plan is to shelter in place, ensure you have called 000 and advise where they are, who they are, how many persons onsite and contact number/s and seek advise as to next steps.
3. Seek advise from your regional emergency management team:
  - a. Manager, Operations and Emergency Management,
  - b. Emergency Management Support Officer
  - c. Regional IMT (if activated).

They can also seek out additional information and advice from emergency services on your behalf. Make sure you have located the contact details for your regional emergency management team in your emergency management plan.

4. When it is safe to do so, report the incident to the Incident Support Operations Centre on 1800 126 126
5. Continue to monitor conditions on your school or service site and any impacts such as the presence of smoke and embers.
6. Continue to monitor warnings and advice messages in your area through the VicEmergency or emergency radio. If there is a bushfire in your watch zone with an associated warning area that does not cover the school or service site, seek further advise to determine if any actions are necessary.

### Other sources of Information

The VicEmergency Hotline can be called on 1800 226 226 for any information on the incidents and warnings in your area.

Your local emergency broadcaster and ABC local radio. Include a battery powered radio in your emergency kit to use if necessary due to the possibility of power outages.

## Actions for your school or service when it is within a VicEmergency warning area

Use the VicEmergency application or website to confirm if your school or service is in a warning area. You can also set a watch zone within the application to get push notifications for warnings.

Remember that a shelter-in-place location is NOT a bushfire refuge. Leaving early is always the best option.

VicEmergency Warning	What it means	School or Service Actions
<b>Advice Warning</b>	Issued to notify the community that an incident/event has occurred that may escalate to impact on life or property. Actions may be recommended by emergency services for preparedness or vulnerable groups.	If your school or service is in an Advice Warning area, then seek advice and monitor conditions as they may change.

<b>Watch and Act</b>	Issued when an incident/event is likely to or is directly impacting the community. You will need to need decide how to take action now.	If your school or service is in a Watch and Act Warning area, seek advice and then decide whether to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remain on site, shelter in place (if required) and monitor the situation</li> <li>• call parents to pick up their children <b>if safe to do so.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Emergency Warning</b>	Issued when the community is in imminent danger of an incident or event and needs to take action now.	If your school or service is in an Emergency Warning area and the warning states that it is too late to leave, then shelter in place and seek advice.  Advise parents and carers that they should not travel to the site to pick up their children.  If parents do arrive, then advise them to also shelter in place with staff and students at the school.
<b>Prepare to Evacuate</b>	Issued when it is recommended that the community should quickly prepare to leave the area.  This may include undertaking actions to prepare their family, gather critical items and protect their property.	If your school or service is in an Evacuation area; comply with evacuation instructions provided and seek advice.
<b>Evacuate Now</b>	Issued when it is recommended that the community leave immediately, or processes are in place to evacuate communities.	If your school or service is in an Evacuation area; comply with evacuation instructions provided and seek advice.
<b>Sheltering in Place</b>	Issued when it is recommended that the community shelter in their current location.	If sheltering in place is required, move all children, students, staff and visitors to the Shelter in Place (SIP) building, if possible, provided it is safe to do so.

## Actions for your school to Shelter-in-Place

Depending on conditions and following advice from emergency services, it may be safest for your school to shelter in place in your SIP:

- take your emergency kit, a first aid kit, your emergency management plan and student and staff attendance lists.
- check fire equipment including torches, water, batteries, radio, water, mops, buckets, school portable phone, P2 smoke masks, personal protective equipment and mobile phone are in the SIP.

- check that all students, staff and visitors are present
- ensure communications with emergency services are maintained. The Communications Officer, or a nominated person, should monitor the phones and radios.
- advise parents that the school is sheltering in place and they should not come to pick their children up. If parents arrive, encourage them to stay with their children at the school in the SIP
- check all windows and doors in the SIP are closed, do not lock the doors. If shutters are installed on windows, close the shutters.
- turn off the gas supply.
- turn on any sprinkler system around the school grounds (if this does not compromise other water-based defence systems)
- if safe to do so, relocate cars and any other movable combustible objects to greater than 20m from the SIP, and the evacuation path between the SIP
- staff should respond to students who show signs of, or are known to be, susceptible to smoke. If possible, supply these students with P2 smoke masks and any medication they require.
- wait for emergency services to arrive or provide further information
- once in your SIP, any decision to leave the SIP should only occur on advice of emergency services
- continually monitor the SIP building for embers or building ignitions and immediately put them out, when safe to do so.
- staff, where possible, should wear full length, fire resistant natural fibre clothing (like wool or cotton) and other personal protective equipment including goggles, leather gloves and P2 smoke masks, for patrolling the SIP for embers and building ignitions
- if the building has ignited and is not safe to extinguish evacuate to the Onsite Evacuation Location via the defined route
- maintain a record of actions decisions undertaken and times.

## Resources:

---

**To support schools in their bushfire preparedness planning and enacting their plans when required, plan templates and checklists are available below, and on the Policy and Advisory Library in the Resources Tab.**

1. **[Pre-season bushfire preparedness for schools](#)**

Checklists for schools in Categories 0-3 Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) and Category 4 to prepare before the fire season.



2. **Enacting your pre-emptive action plan (relocation, learning from home or closure)**

Checklist for schools in Category 0, 1 and 2 on days of forecasted High or Extreme FDR in their local government area.

3. **Enacting your Catastrophic FDR closure.**

Checklist for schools in Category 0-3 (BARR) and Category 4 on days forecasted as Catastrophic FDR in their fire district.

4. **Enacting your Catastrophic FDR service closure.**

Checklist for early childhood services in Category 0-3 (BARR) and Category 4 on days forecasted as Catastrophic FDR in their fire district.

This checklist is intended for use as a guide for services to support their own emergency management procedures.

5. **Pre-emptive action plan template (relocation)**

Template for schools in Category 0, 1 and 2 to develop a relocation plan for use on days of forecasted High or Extreme FDR in their local government area.

6. **Pre-emptive action plan template (learning from home)**

Template for schools in Category 0, 1 and 2 to develop a relocation plan for use on days of forecasted High or Extreme FDR in their local government area.

7. **Pre-emptive action plan template (closure)**

Template for schools in Category 0, 1 and 2 to develop a relocation plan for use on days of forecasted High or Extreme FDR in their local government area.

# Pre-season bushfire preparedness for schools

Checklist for schools in Categories 0-3 Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) and Category 4 to prepare before the fire season.

## Pre-season preparedness for all schools in Categories 0-3 (BARR) and Category 4

Steps to prepare before the fire season	Complete	Comments
Receive notification of fire risk category by Security and Emergency Management Division during the planning period (from June-September).	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Emergency Management Plan updated to include pre-emptive action or closure procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Complete the <b>School Bushfire Site Readiness Review Checklist</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Arrangements including communication strategy for fire season shared with staff, parents and carers, other users of the school facilities during and outside normal operating hours (such as community groups), contractors (such as builders) and visitors before the fire season,	<input type="checkbox"/>	
School community advised that the school must close on a forecasted day of Catastrophic FDR in your fire weather district. <b><u>Closure means that no one can attend the school site, and that learning from home cannot be conducted.</u></b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Schools may consider advising their school community to:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1. Review their own <a href="#">bushfire plan</a> and alternative care arrangements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Download the VicEmergency application check the VicEmergency and CFA websites and media coverage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Posters and communications prepared to use at the school on a Catastrophic FDR day and to send out to the school community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>If your school is a coordinating bus school notify:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
parents and students before the fire season of potential bus route cancellations if a forecasted day of Catastrophic FDR occurs in the relevant fire district/s.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
client school principals of before the fire season of potential bus route cancellations if a forecasted day of Catastrophic FDR occurs in the relevant fire district/s.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
bus operators and drivers before the fire season of potential bus route cancellations if a forecasted day of Catastrophic FDR occurs in the relevant fire district/s.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>If your school is a client bus school notify:</b>		
travellers		

## Development of pre-emptive action plan (relocation, learning from home or closure) for elevated fire danger ratings for schools in Categories 0, 1 and 2.

Your school's pre-emptive action plan should be developed in consultation with regional emergency management staff and reviewed by your senior education improvement leader (SEIL) prior to approval by your Regional Director. After approval by your regional director, your plan should be monitored each year to ensure it is still up to date. Any changes to your plan will need to be reviewed and approved by your regional director.

**You must have an approved plan in place by 1 September each year.**

### Develop your plan – pre-emptive relocation

Relocation is always the preferred option to ensure safety for staff and students and the continuity of education where possible.

Steps to develop the plan	Complete	Comments
Assessed the logistics, risks and benefits of relocation to operate on another school site on a day of elevated fire danger (High or Extreme FDR in LGA according to BARR Category and department advice).	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Suitable host school identified. Work with regional emergency management staff and SEIL.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Planned relocation discussed and agreed to key stakeholders, including the host school. Be aware of individual and family bushfire plans and identify what staff members and students may not be attending a relocated school site.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Transportation options identified and included as part of the proposed relocation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Relocation plan documented, including the transport arrangements for students and staff to the host school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Plan submitted to SEIL for review and progression to the regional director for approval.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The regional director approved pre-emptive action plan uploaded into the school's Emergency Management Plan in the Specific Response Procedures and confirmed with the approved host school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Host schools to upload a copy of the pre-emptive action plan to school Emergency Management Plan once confirmed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Approved pre-emptive actions communicated to school community before the commencement of the fire season. Consider options for practicing your plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Ensure you are prepared to enact your plan</b>		

## Develop your plan – learning from home

Learning from home plans should only be considered for pre-emptive bushfire action if relocation has been proven to not be feasible, including when a school and region have not been able to identify a suitable host school, or where there is another inhibiting factor that means relocation is not possible as a pre-emptive action. In these circumstances, schools may consider the suitability of learning from home on days of elevated fire danger.

Steps to develop the plan	Complete	Comments
Determine the appropriateness and feasibility of learning from home on a day of elevated fire danger (High or Extreme FDR in LGA). Work with your regional emergency management staff and SEIL.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensure that learning from home does not place students at greater risk than relocation, taking supervision and the risk posed by location of school community into account.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Learning from home on days of High or Extreme FDR in your LGA discussed and supported by key stakeholders. Be aware of individual and family bushfire plans and identify what staff members and students may not be able to participate in learning from home due to their own plans. See the CFA <a href="#">Bushfire Plan</a> page for more information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Learning from home pre-emptive action plan documented. Include staff availability, means of carrying out learning, student health and wellbeing considerations and business continuity arrangements for technology impacts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Plan submitted to SEIL for review and progression to the regional director for approval.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The regional director approved pre-emptive action plan uploaded into the school's Emergency Management Plan in the Specific Response Procedures and confirmed with the approved host school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Approved pre-emptive actions communicated to school community before the commencement of the fire season. <b>Ensure you are prepared to enact your plan.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Develop your plan – pre-emptive closure

In some instances, both relocation and learning from home are not possible. A school may then request, or be instructed, that their pre-emptive action is to close on days of elevated fire danger (High or Extreme FDR in LGA according to BARR Category).

Steps to develop the plan	Complete	Comments
No suitable alternatives (relocation or learning from home) to closure identified. Work with your regional emergency management staff and SEIL to confirm.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Plan to close on days of High or Extreme FDR in your LGA discussed and supported by key stakeholders. Be aware of individual and family bushfire plans and how closure may impact arrangements on days of elevated fire danger.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pre-emptive closure action plan documented.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Submit your plan to your SEIL for review and progression to the regional director for approval.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The regional director approved pre-emptive action plan uploaded into the school's Emergency Management Plan in the Specific Response Procedures and confirmed with the approved host school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Approved pre-emptive actions communicated to school community before the commencement of the fire season. <b>Ensure you are prepared to enact your plan.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



# Pre-emptive school relocation plan

Your school's relocation plan should be developed in consultation with regional emergency management staff and reviewed by your senior education improvement leader (SEIL) prior to approval by your Regional Director.

## RELOCATING SCHOOLS DETAILS

Relocating School/Campus Name:	Principal:	Contact Number:
Relocating School Address:		
Number of enrolled students:	Number planning to relocate:	
Number of staff:	Number planning to relocate:	

## HOST SCHOOL DETAILS

Where a host school has not been identified, continue to **education continuity details** section

Host School Name:	Principal:	Contact Number:
Host School Address:		
Distance by road from Relocating School to Host School (kms):		

## HOST SCHOOL/ CAMPUS

The host school has classroom and outdoor space and facilities to accommodate all relocating students and staff, including those with special needs.	Please describe where students will be accommodated.
The following infrastructure support has been negotiated to facilitate successful relocation.	Relocatable classrooms Portable toilets Furnishings – please specify
The relocating school has been oriented to the host school's Emergency Management Plan and response requirements for specific emergencies.	
In an emergency, and where evacuation is not possible, the host school's shelter-in-place location will accommodate the relocating students and staff.	Please describe how any issues have been resolved.

## EDUCATION CONTINUITY DETAILS

Where a host school has not been identified or relocation is not feasible,

use this section to outline educational continuity arrangements.

## RELOCATING SCHOOL

Parents/carers and school council have been consulted about the relocation.

Please list any concerns raised and describe how these have been resolved.

Relocating school staff have been consulted about the relocation.

Staff/student ratios able to be met.

Yes/No

Number of children requiring Outside School Hours Care.

Outside School Hours Care requirements have been considered. Describe what alternative arrangements will be in place.

Outline how it will be confirmed that no students arrive on site on the closure day

## STUDENT TRANSPORT

Indicative number of students to be transported to and from host school by parents.  
Indicative number of students to be transported to and from host school by bus.

For bus transport the following arrangements have been negotiated:

- Name of bus provider/company contracted to provide service
- Contact number
- Pick up points and times
- Drop off points and times, including contingency arrangements for adverse weather conditions
- Cost if outside of scheduled routes

Attach map of bus route

Describe contingency transport arrangements if bus arrangements fail on the day.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Outline communication arrangements	
Other users of the site (such as sporting and community groups) have been advised of the relocation and alternative arrangements made as required.	
Support services (including mobile library, SSS, school nurses, volunteers, canteen staff and crossing supervisor) have been notified of the relocation approval and will be informed in advance of each relocation.	
<b>OTHER CONSIDERATIONS</b>	
For example: Financial implications If there are financial implications, please itemise these costs.	
Other:	

**These arrangements are agreed upon by the undersigned:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of the Principal of Relocating School)      (print name)      (date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of the Principal of Host School)      (print name)      (date)

**Approved by**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of the Regional Director)      (print name)      (date)

# Pre-emptive school learning from home plan

Learning from home should only be considered if relocation has been proven to not be feasible, including when a school and region have not been able to identify a suitable host school, or where there is another inhibiting factor that means relocation is not possible. To continue the continuity of education, develop a plan to conduct learning from home where safe to do so, in consultation with regional emergency management staff. The plan should be reviewed by your senior education improvement leader (SEIL) prior to approval by your Regional Director.

SCHOOL DETAILS		
School/Campus Name:	Principal:	Contact Number:
School Address:		
Number of enrolled students:	Students planned to learn from home:	
Number of staff:	Staff available to teach from home:	

Home learning arrangements	
Method of learning	Outline how learning will be provided, when this will be supplied and how learning resources will be accessed
Technology availability (consider how learning can be supported if internet access or power is not available)	Outline what technology is available for students and what the continuity arrangements will be available if there are disruptions.
Staff available to facilitate learning from home	Consider staff availability and any personal bushfire safety plans that may impact ability to provide learning from home.
Student health and wellbeing plan	Outline what is in place to support student health and wellbeing
Additional considerations	List any further considerations

SCHOOL	
Parents/carers and school council have been consulted about the learning from home arrangements	Please list any concerns raised and describe how these have been resolved.
School staff have been consulted about the learning from home arrangements	
Outline how it will be confirmed that no students arrive on site on the closure day	
Consideration of children requiring Outside School Hours Care and communication provided	

STUDENT TRANSPORT	
Will there be any student transport services impacted for other schools?	Outline any other impacted schools and how the learning from home plan has been communicated to them.

COMMUNICATIONS	
----------------	--

Outline communication arrangements	
Other users of the site (such as sporting and community groups) have been advised of the learning from home plan and alternative arrangements made as required.	
Support services (including mobile library, SSS, school nurses, volunteers, canteen staff and crossing supervisor) have been notified of the learning from home plan and how they will be informed.	

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

For example: Financial implications If there are financial implications, please itemise these costs.	
Other:	

**These arrangements are agreed upon by the undersigned:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of the Principal of Relocating School)      \_\_\_\_\_ (print name)      \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of the Principal of Host School)      \_\_\_\_\_ (print name)      \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

**Approved by**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of the Regional Director)      \_\_\_\_\_ (print name)      \_\_\_\_\_ (date)



# Pre-emptive school closure plan

(for elevated fire danger (High and Extreme) pre-emptive action only)

Relocation is always the preferred option to ensure safety for staff and students and the continuity of education, however this is not always possible for every school. Where relocation is not feasible then a flexible learning from home plan should be considered to continue education where it safe to do so. If learning from home is not possible, in consultation with regional emergency management staff, pre-emptive closure may occur. The plan should be reviewed by your senior education improvement leader (SEIL) prior to approval by your Regional Director.

SCHOOL DETAILS		
School/Campus Name:	Principal:	Contact Number:
School Address:		
Number of enrolled students:	Number of staff:	

Home learning arrangements	
Outline the reasons why relocation and learning from home are not possible	
Student health and wellbeing plan	Outline what is in place to support student health and wellbeing
Additional considerations	List any further considerations

SCHOOL	
Parents/carers and school council have been consulted about the pre-emptive closure arrangements	Please list any concerns raised and describe how these have been resolved.
School staff have been consulted about the pre-emptive closure arrangements	
Consideration of children requiring Outside School Hours Care and communication provided	
Outline how it will be confirmed that no students arrive on site on the closure day	

STUDENT TRANSPORT	
Will there be any student transport services impacted for other schools?	Outline any other impacted schools and how the learning from home plan has been communicated to them.

COMMUNICATIONS	
Outline communication arrangements	
Other users of the site (such as sporting and community groups) have been advised about the pre-emptive closure arrangements and	

alternative arrangements made as required.

Support services (including mobile library, SSS, school nurses, volunteers, canteen staff and crossing supervisor) have been notified of the pre-emptive closure arrangements and how they will be informed.

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

For example:

Financial implications

If there are financial implications, please itemise these costs.

Other:

#### These arrangements are agreed upon by the undersigned:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of the Principal of Relocating School)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of the Principal of Host School)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

#### Approved by

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of the Regional Director)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

# Enacting your school's pre-emptive action plan

(relocation, learning from home or closure)

Checklist for schools in Category 0, 1 and 2 on days of forecasted High or Extreme FDR in their local government area.

## School details

School/ campus name:			
School address:			
Principal's name:		Mobile number:	
<b>For relocating schools only</b>			
Host school/ campus name:			
Host school address:		Host school office number:	

## Enacting your pre-emptive action plan

	Completed	Comments
Your region confirmed the forecast or a High or Extreme FDR in your LGA.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>For relocation only</b>		
Host school contacted to confirm that they can accommodate your school. <b>If host school cannot accommodate, discuss alternatives with region.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Arrangements confirmed for student transport to host school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Student Activity Locator (SAL) updated for your school to be on site at the host school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>For learning from home only</b>		
Staff and technology availability confirmed to deliver learning from home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>For relocation, learning from home and closure</b>		
Confirmed with regional emergency management staff, IMT or SEIL that regional director approval has been given to enact pre-emptive action plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

School community advised that you have activated your pre-emptive action plan. <b>Use read receipts or a reply prompt to confirm that all parents and carers have received the message.</b>		
All parents and carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff and volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Students	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Contractors (such as cleaners)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Visitors	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Co-located facilities (such as Out of School Hours Care)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other users of the site (such as community or sports)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
School Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Notified the department:		
Regional emergency management staff (and regional IMT if activated)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Senior Education Improvement Leader (SEIL)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
eduSafe Plus report submitted online or by phone on 1800 126 126	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Bus coordinator</b> school principals to notify:		
Bus operators and drivers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Parents, carers and students	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Any other parties involved in student transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Any other people using the school bus who may be impacted	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Client school</b> principals to notify:		
Parents, carers and students	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Any other people using the school bus who may be impacted	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Sspecial schools</b> must also notify:		
Parents, carers and students	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Student Transport Unit (STU)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

On the school site, signs posted at all entrances/exits advising of arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Confirm arrangements for ensuring no students arrive on site on the elevated fire danger day	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Student Activity Locator updated for cancellation or changes to any camps and excursions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alternative arrangements in place for scheduled excursions, departing or returning camps.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Completed checklist provided to your regional emergency management staff by 9am on the forecasted elevated FDR day.</b>		
<b>Discuss arrangements with region if a High or Extreme FDR day is forecast for the next day.</b>		

### Checklist completion – endorsement

-----  
Principal

Date:

### After actioning your checklist – monitor and maintain situational awareness

Monitor the conditions and keep in contact with your regional emergency management staff. Confirm if your school can return to on-site learning for the next school day.



# Enacting your school's Catastrophic FDR closure

Checklist for schools in Category 0-3 (BARR) and Category 4 on days forecasted Catastrophic FDR in their fire district.

School details		
School/ campus name:		
School address:		
Principal's name:	Mobile number:	

When advised of a <i>possible</i> Catastrophic FDR	Completed	Comments
Advice received of <b>possible</b> Catastrophic FDR day forecasted in your fire district. You will be advised via phone or email.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Possibility</i> of a school closure due to a forecasted Catastrophic FDR day in your fire district communicated to staff, students and school community, as well as any contractors/site users.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Advise of <b>possible</b> bus route closures: <b>Coordinating school principals</b> must notify parents and students, client school principals and bus operators and drivers.  <b>Client school principals</b> must notify travellers and parents.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Monitor conditions and communicate with regional emergency management staff (or regional Incident Management Team (IMT)).</b>		
<b>If the forecast changes, and there is no longer a Catastrophic FDR forecast for the following day</b> , schools will be advised via phone or email to either continue education as usual or to enact their pre-emptive action plan for elevated fire danger. If there is no longer a Catastrophic FDR forecast for the following day, <u>no further action is required on this checklist.</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

If the Catastrophic FDR forecast is confirmed		
Advise school community that the closure for the Catastrophic FDR has been confirmed <b><u>No one is allowed on site during the closure.</u></b> <b>Use read receipts or a reply prompt to confirm that all parents and carers have received the message.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

All parents and carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff and volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Students	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Contractors (such as cleaners)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Visitors	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Co-located facilities (such as Out of School Hours Care)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other users of the site (such as community or sports)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
School Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Bus route closures confirmed	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Coordinating school principals</b> must notify:		
Bus operators and drivers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Parents, carers and students	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Any other parties involved in student transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Any other people using the school bus who may be impacted	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Client school principals</b> must notify:		
Parents, carers and students	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Any other people using the school bus who may be impacted	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Special schools</b> must notify:		
Parents, carers and students	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Student Transport Unit (STU)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
On the school site, signs posted at all entrances/exits advising of arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Confirm arrangements for ensuring no students arrive on site on the elevated fire danger day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Planned excursions cancelled	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alternative arrangements in place for scheduled excursions, departing or returning camps.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Student Activity Locator updated	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Completed checklist provided to your regional emergency management staff by 9am on the forecasted elevated FDR day.</b>		

### Checklist completion – endorsement

----- Date:  
**Principal**

### After actioning your checklist – monitor and maintain situational awareness

Monitor the conditions and keep in contact with your regional emergency management staff. Confirm if your school can return to on-site learning for the next school day.

# Enacting your early childhood service Catastrophic FDR closure

Checklist for early childhood services in Category 0-3 (BARR) and Category 4 on days forecasted Catastrophic FDR in their fire district.

This checklist is intended for use as a guide for services to support their own emergency management procedures.

When advised of a <i>possible</i> Catastrophic FDR	Completed	Comments
Advice received of <b>possible</b> Catastrophic FDR day forecasted in your fire district. You will be advised via phone or email.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Possibility</i> of a closure due to a forecasted Catastrophic FDR day in your fire district communicated to staff and service community, as well as any contractors/site users as required.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Monitor conditions and communicate with your regional QARD contacts or regional Incident Management Team (IMT) if activated.</b>		
<b>If the forecast changes, and there is no longer a Catastrophic FDR forecast for the following day,</b> confirmation will be sent to services via phone or email. If there is no longer a Catastrophic FDR forecast for the following day, <u>no further steps are required.</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>If the Catastrophic FDR forecast is confirmed</b>		
Advise your service community that the closure for the Catastrophic FDR has been confirmed. <b><u>It is recommended that no one is allowed on site during the closure.</u></b> <b>It is recommended that you use read receipts or a reply prompt to confirm that all parents and carers have received the message.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
All parents and carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff and volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Contractors (such as cleaners)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Visitors	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other users of the site (such as community or sports)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
It is recommended that signs posted at all entrances/exits of the service advising of arrangements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Next steps – monitor and maintain situational awareness

Monitor the conditions and keep in contact with your regional emergency management staff.  
Confirm if your school can return to on-site learning for the next school day.  
Confirm if your service can reopen the next school day.