# BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT AND PREPAREDNESS POLICY

**Help for non-English speakers**

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the office on 5998 2304.

# PURPOSE

To prepare for and then ensure the safety of students, staff and school visitors on days of forecast elevated fire danger taking into consideration the importance of shared responsibility and continuance of education.

# GUIDELINES

**Preparedness**

All schools must have a prerequisite Emergency Management Planning Policy.

All registered schools, as a component of their registration, must comply with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) [Guidelines for Bushfire Preparedness](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/bushfireguidelines.doc).

### Bushfire at Risk Register (BARR)

Schools around Victoria are at varying risk from bushfire. The Department’s [Bushfire at Risk Register](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/bushfirerisk.aspx) (BARR) records the schools and early childhood services most at risk from bushfire. Devon Meadows Primary School is not on the Bushfire at Risk Register.

### Shelter-in-place building

All schools (regardless of their BARR status) must nominate a building or buildings on the school site that can provide temporary accommodation until emergency services arrive and/or as a building of last resort if there is insufficient time to evacuate. The school must identify the shelter-in-place in their Emergency Management Plan.

### Catastrophic Fire danger rating

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 a Compass News Item.

The Department maintains a list of schools and early childhood services most at risk of grassfire, refer to [Schools and early childhood services at risk of grassfire (Category 4)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/bushfire-preparedness-category-4-schools-and-ecs-2020-21.xlsx). This list is reviewed annually.

Devon Meadows Primary School is a Category 4 school. Schools and early childhood services on this list must close on days that are determined to be Catastrophic fire danger rating Central fire district.

### Fire in the landscape

In the event of exposure to an immediate bushfire threat or other emergency, the school principal has the authority to enact the school’s emergency management plan.

**Management**

Devon Meadows Primary School will:

* regularly manage materials that may easily be ignited around buildings and facilities.
* regularly monitor buildings to ensure exits are continuously kept clear of obstructions.
* have schedule for monitoring and removal of materials that may be easily ignited including branches overhanging buildings, debris and rubbish including gutters and dry grass vegetation.
* Ensure access to facilities and grounds by emergency vehicles

**Communication**

Devon Meadows Primary School will:

* At the beginning of each year communicate to the community the Bushfire Management and Preparedness Policy and the publish on Compass the ‘School Preparations for the Bushfire Season’.
* If required, publish on Compass a news item informing parents for potential closure of school due to catastrophic fire danger warning
* If required, publish on Compass a news item informing parents of the cancellation of potential closure of school due to catastrophic fire danger warning
* If required, publish on Compass a news item sent to parents for confirming closure of school due to catastrophic fire danger warning
* If required, a message will be left on the school phone if the school is closed due to catastrophic fire danger warning
* All communication documents are on the U drive 🡪 Emergency Management System ESM 🡪 Emergency Management 🡪 Bushfire

# EVALUATION

All policies will be reviewed annually as part of the school’s cyclic review process.



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| Policy last reviewed | 9/9/2025 |
| Approved by | Principal |
| Next scheduled review date | September 2026 |