



Bushfire Preparedness Policy

PURPOSE

To ensure the safety of the staff and students at Maldon Primary School in the event of a Catastrophic fire danger day.

POLICY

Schools that have been identified as being at high fire risk and are on the Department of Education's Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/bushfirerisk.aspx#subM> may close on days determined to be Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating. **Maldon Primary School is on the Bushfire At-Risk Register and will close when a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating day is forecast in the Mount Alexander Shire Local Government Area.**

A Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating day will usually be determined by 5.00pm the day before the potential closure although a late determination is possible. Once we are advised of the Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating day, we will provide parents with advice of the school closure. This advice will be in the form of a uEducateUs notification and/or a paper note sent home with students. Closure information will also be published on the Department of Education's website <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/pages/closures.aspx>

In circumstances where there is a late downgrade from a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating day the decision on whether the school will or will not close will be made by the Regional Director in consultation with Maldon Primary School. Any changes will be communicated to parents via a uEducateUs notification.

It is important to note that:

- No staff will be on site on days where the school is closed due to a forecast Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating day.
- Before school and after school care will also be cancelled on these days.
- The school bus route will be cancelled if a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating day is forecast in the Mount Alexander Shire Local Government Area. It will also be cancelled if a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating day is forecast in the Greater Bendigo Local Government Area as the bus travels through this area.

Off-site activities will be cancelled, postponed or relocated if a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating day is determined for the local government area in which the off-site activity is located or if the activity is faced with the threat of bushfire. Off-site activities include any activity undertaken by staff/students away from their normal school facility such as camps, excursions, sporting activities and training or conferences.

On Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating days, families are encouraged to enact their Bushfire Survival Plan. On such days children should never be left at home alone or in the care of older children.

As part of preparing our school for potential hazards such as fire, the school's Emergency Management Plan is regularly updated in accordance with Department of Education and Training guidelines, ensuring that we are prepared in the event of a bushfire.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2025