



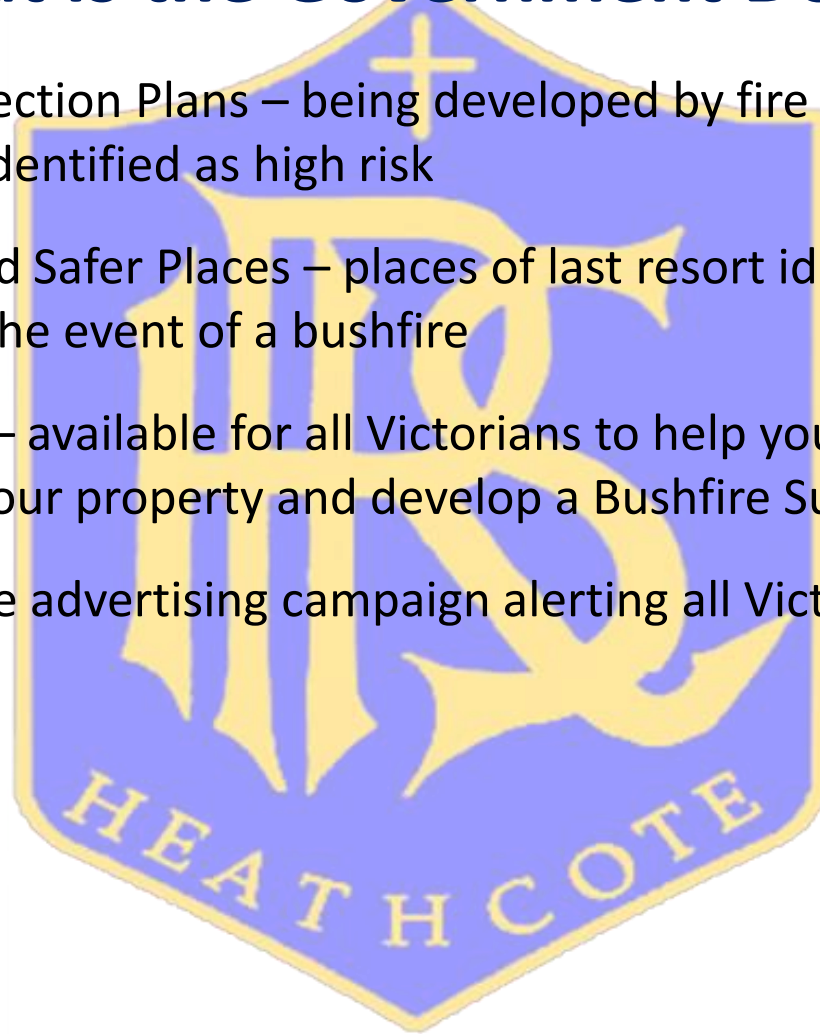
***Ensuring  
Holy Rosary Primary School  
is  
Fire Ready***

# 2015/16 Summer Outlook ...

- A decade of below average rainfall means the state remains quite dry. Even average rains over the period are unlikely to see the fire risk decrease due to the long term drying that has occurred. As temperatures rise leading into summer, soil moisture will decrease and fuel loads in forests and grasslands are expected to dry quickly.
- Grassfires spread rapidly and can quickly threaten lives and property.
- The safety of children and staff is of the highest importance.
- We are committed to ensuring our school is fire ready

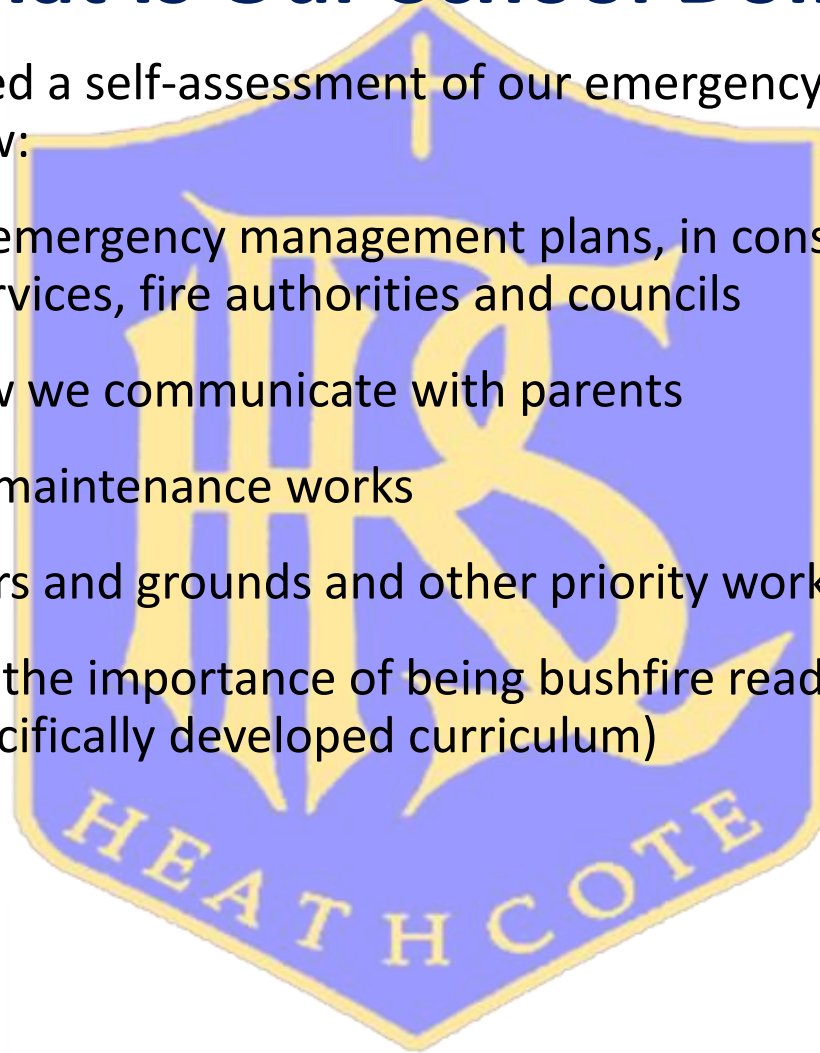
# What is the Government Doing?

- Township Protection Plans – being developed by fire agencies and the local communities identified as high risk
- Neighbourhood Safer Places – places of last resort identified by authorities as a safer place in the event of a bushfire
- Fire Ready Kit – available for all Victorians to help you understand your bushfire risk, prepare your property and develop a Bushfire Survival Plan
- Comprehensive advertising campaign alerting all Victorians to the need to be fire ready

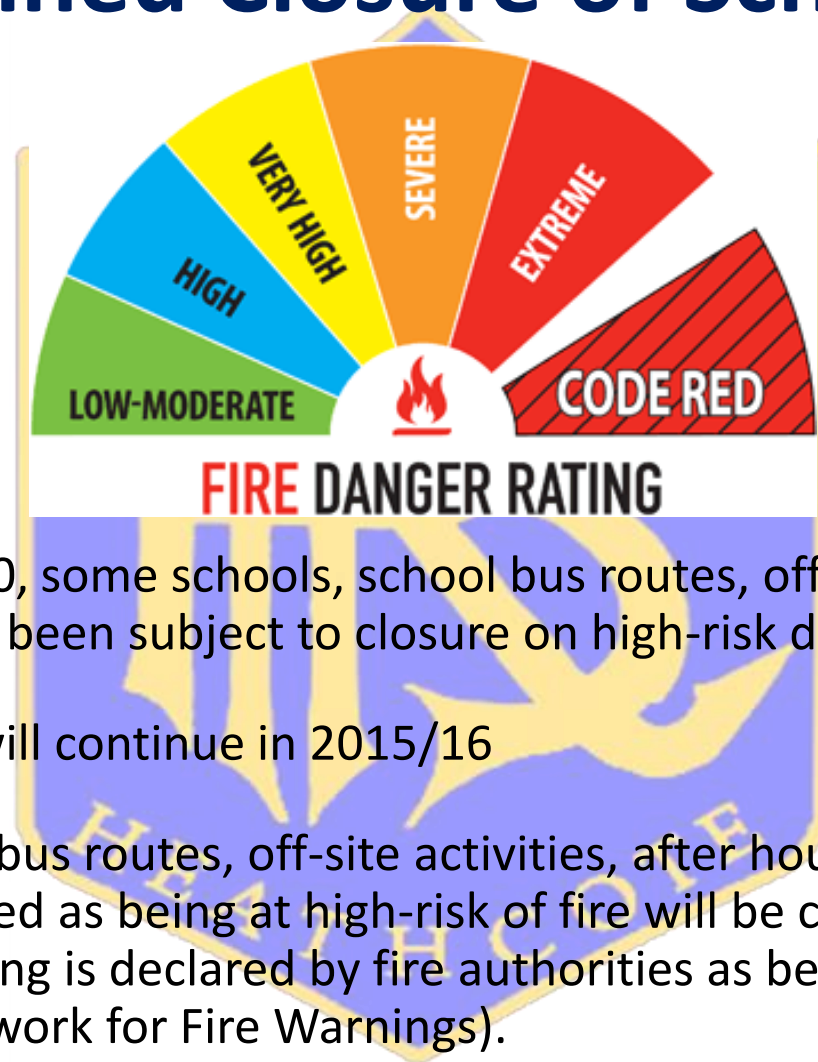


# What Is Our School Doing?

- We have completed a self-assessment of our emergency preparedness and risk of fire and are now:
  - Updating our emergency management plans, in consultation with local emergency services, fire authorities and councils
  - Reviewing how we communicate with parents
  - Reprioritising maintenance works
  - Clearing gutters and grounds and other priority works
- We are discussing the importance of being bushfire ready with your children (supported by specifically developed curriculum)



# Planned Closure of Schools



- Since 2009/2010, some schools, school bus routes, offsite activities and after hours care have been subject to closure on high-risk days.
- This approach will continue in 2015/16
- Schools, school bus routes, off-site activities, after hours care and children's services identified as being at high-risk of fire will be closed on days when the Fire Danger Rating is declared by fire authorities as being **Code Red** (as per National Framework for Fire Warnings).

# How Will I Be Advised of a Planned Closure?

- Where possible, we will provide **up to 3 days notice** of a planned closure (including warnings about cancelling, changing, rescheduling or recalling off-site activities, such as camps and excursions), as well as information about changes to bus transport routes
- You will be **advised by letter**— you can also check for updates at [www.cecv.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au)
- You should expect that, in some instances, **fewer than 3 days notice may be provided**
- The final decision to close will be **confirmed no later than 12 noon the day before planned closure**
- **Once the decision to close is made, this will not change** – regardless of changes in weather forecast – this will help limit confusion and provide time for you to make alternative care arrangements for your children

# Closure – Other Than Planned

- While every effort is made to anticipate fire threats, our school may be threatened by an unpredicted breakout of a fire or a known fire unexpectedly changing course.
- When this occurs, our Emergency Management Plan will ensure that we respond to the threat in a timely and appropriate manner.
- We have developed our Emergency Management Plan in consultation with local emergency services, fire authorities and local government authorities.
- It is important that you understand our Emergency Management Plan - copies are available from our office or talk to your teacher
- Closure updates, including advice on re-opening is available from the CECV's website [www.cecv.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au)

# Likely scenarios

Service \ Scenario	Closure Trigger – (Code Red) Reached	Fire in adjacent area; no immediate threat to facility	Unpredicted fire threat
School	School identified as being at high risk preemptively closed	Diocese/school monitors fire; school open	School enacts emergency management plan
School Transport	School bus routes preemptively closed if routes unsafe	School bus routes may close if route is unsafe	School bus routes closed
Off-site activities	School cancels activity preemptively	School monitors fire; enacts emergency management plan	School enacts emergency management plan
Camps	School cancels camps preemptively or withdraws students	Diocese & provider monitors fire; enacts emergency management plans	Provider enacts emergency management plan



# What can you do?

- **Make sure ...** your family's bushfire survival plan is up-to-date, including how your child will be cared for when their school is closed due to threat of fire. **Your child should not be left unattended.**
- **Make sure...** we have your current contact details, including mobile phone number
- **Keep in touch ...** with us – read newsletters, check websites, talk to your child's teacher and other parents
- **Understand** our Emergency Management Plan
- If age appropriate, **talk to your child** about bushfires and your family's bushfire survival plan
- **Talk to us – your principal, teacher or school council representative,** if you have any concerns

# Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

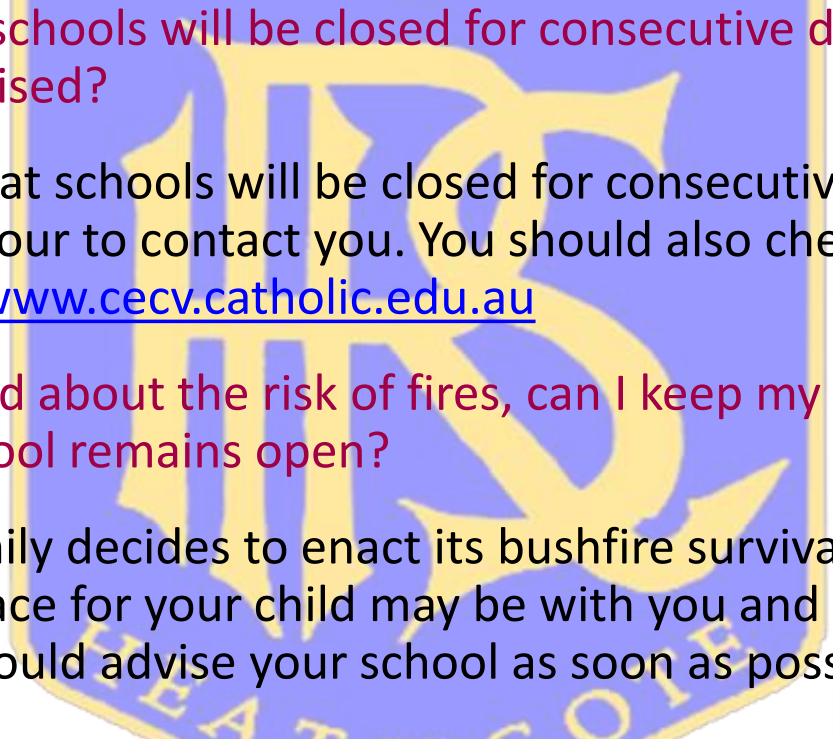
Q. When the school is closed, will any staff remain on-site?

A. No. The safety of staff and students is our main priority and no staff will remain on-site.

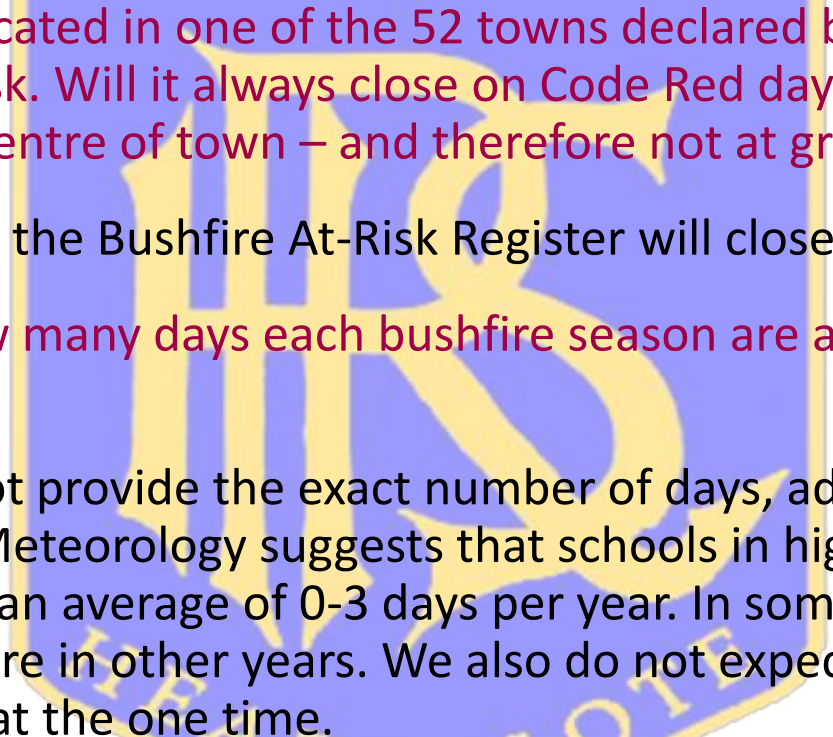
Q. What happens if the forecast changes and it is no longer necessary to close?

A. If the Bureau of Meteorology or the CFA downgrades the risk forecast in the lead-up to a planned closure of a school, we may cancel the closure and allow the school to open. The final decision to pre-emptively close a school will be made at 12 noon the day prior to the planned closure. Any improvements in weather forecast after this time will not change the decision to close – this will help limit confusion and provide time for parents to make alternative care arrangements for your children.

# Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

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- Q. Is it likely that schools will be closed for consecutive days? If yes, how will parents be advised?
- A. It is possible that schools will be closed for consecutive days. If this occurs, we will endeavour to contact you. You should also check the CECV's website for updates – [www.cecv.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au)
- Q. If I'm concerned about the risk of fires, can I keep my child away from school, even if the school remains open?
- A. Yes. If your family decides to enact its bushfire survival plan, the most appropriate place for your child may be with you and your family, and not at school. You should advise your school as soon as possible of your child's absence.

# Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

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- The logo for St. Ignace Catholic School is a shield-shaped emblem. It features a blue background with a large, stylized yellow 'S' and 'I' in the center. Above the shield is a yellow cross. The words 'ST. IGNACE CATHOLIC SCHOOL' are written in yellow around the bottom and sides of the shield.
- Q. Our school is located in one of the 52 towns declared by the Government as being at high risk. Will it always close on Code Red days, despite it being located in the centre of town – and therefore not at great risk?
- A. Only schools on the Bushfire At-Risk Register will close on Code Red days.
- Q. On average how many days each bushfire season are at-risk schools likely to need to close?
- A. While we cannot provide the exact number of days, advice from the CFA and the Bureau of Meteorology suggests that schools in high-risk areas could expect to close an average of 0-3 days per year. In some years, there may be no days and more in other years. We also do not expect to close all schools across Victoria at the one time.

# Frequently asked questions and answers

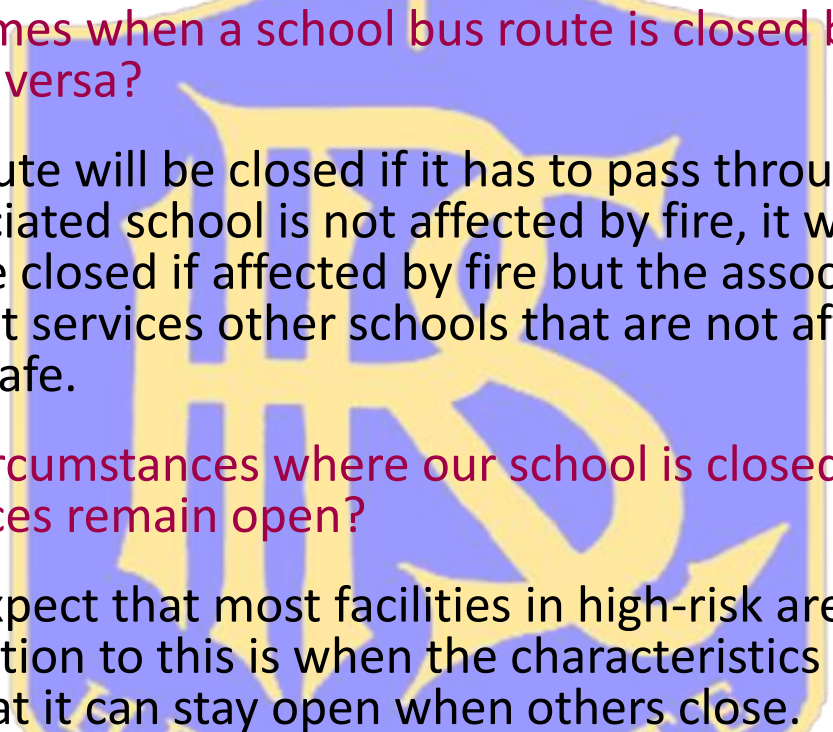
Q. What should I do with my child when the school is closed?

A. You should activate your family's bushfire survival plan that should include alternative child care arrangements. Given the expected severity of the weather conditions, your child should not be left unattended or under the supervision of older children.

Q. Will school offsite activities (e.g. camps, excursions, sporting events) continue to operate during bushfire season? What happens if my child is threatened by fire while participating in an offsite activity?

A. Yes, off-site activities will continue throughout the year. Your school will assess the likely threat of fire when organising the activity. If an offsite activity is threatened by fire, your school will enact its emergency management plan. Offsite activities in areas affected by a predicted Code Red day will be cancelled or recalled.

# Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

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- Q. Will there be times when a school bus route is closed but the school remains open? And vice versa?
- A. A school bus route will be closed if it has to pass through an area affected by fire; if the associated school is not affected by fire, it will remain open. Similarly, a school may be closed if affected by fire but the associated bus route may remain open if it services other schools that are not affected by fire and the route remains safe.
- Q. Will there be circumstances where our school is closed but nearby schools or child care services remain open?
- A. Generally we expect that most facilities in high-risk areas will close on Code Red days. The exception to this is when the characteristics of a particular facility would mean that it can stay open when others close.

# For more information go to

[www.cecv.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au)

Additional resources:

- Country Fire Authority – [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)
- Fire Ready Kit available at: [www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/fire-ready-kit/](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/fire-ready-kit/)
- Victorian Bushfire Information Line (VBIL)  
1800 240 667
- ABC Radio AM 774