

Code Red Day School Closure Procedure

1. Rationale

Schools and early childhood services on the Grassfire at Risk register, regardless of risk category, must close on a determined Code Red day in their weather district, and their buses cancelled. All other buses which travel through the Code Red area will also be closed.

Determined by the Emergency Management Commissioner, a Code Red day is the highest level of Fire Danger Rating and signifies the worst conditions for bushfire and grassfires. Once a Code Red day has been determined this decision will not change, regardless of any changes in the weather forecast.

2. Procedural Statement

Mercy Regional College's O'Keeffe Campus is considered a Category 4 Grassfire school and is listed as one at risk of grassfire. This means on days that are declared Code Red our O'Keeffe Campus will not be operating. No students, staff, parents or contractors will be able to be onsite at O'Keeffe that day. The McAuley Campus will be open for supervision only, as all bus operations will also be cancelled in Code Red declared weather districts. Making transport to McAuley for the majority of students unavailable.

3. Procedure

Ahead of the fire danger period, schools and early childhood services on the grassfire at risk register must:

- advise their school and parent/carer community and all site users of the arrangements for the summer that the school or early childhood facility will be closed on any determined Code Red day and nobody is to be on site that day
- complete the activities outlined in the [Bushfire/Grassfire Readiness Review Checklist](#)
- notify bus travellers and parents/carers that no school bus services will operate to or from a school closed on a determined Code Red day

Before every Code Red Day closure, Catholic Education Ballarat wherever possible, will:

- provide schools and early childhood services with four to seven days' notice of a possible or planned Code Red day closure to enable to schools to forewarn their school and parent/carer community
- confirm the final decision to close a school by 1 pm the day before the planned Code Red day closure
- Ensure that schools confirm to the Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat by email that they have completed all necessary arrangement for the closure and have sent the [School Closure](#)

[on a Forecast Elevated Fire Danger Rating Day Principal Checklist](#) for final approval to Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat by 2:00pm the day prior to closure

- Upon receipt of the checklist, the Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat will acknowledge the school's closure by way of co-signing the principal checklist
- Communicate with the school regarding any transport issues which may impact students.
- Confirm with Principal that arrangements have been made to accommodate altered transport arrangement and altered supervision

Before every Code Red day closure, schools and early childhood services on the grassfire at risk register must:

- Ensure all parents/carers, staff, visitors, contractors and co-located early childhood services are contacted regarding the closure of the school (using communications channels such as PAM, SMS, phone trees, Facebook, email) as soon as possible but no later than 3.30pm the day prior to closure
- Complete the [School Closure on a Forecast Elevated Fire Danger Rating Day Principal Checklist](#) and send it to Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat the no later than 2.00pm the day prior to closure
- Make alternate arrangements for camps and excursions that are due to depart or arrive at the school premises on the day of closure
- Ensure that support services, contractors, visitors and any community groups using the school's facilities during or outside normal school hours (such as sporting groups, after-school programs) will not be entering or attending the school on the day the school is closed
- Ensure Closure signs have been displayed prominently in multiple locations around the school ([Posters - school relocation and closure](#) found in the GARR School Closure Shared Drive)
- Advise parents/carers to :
 - ensure they have made safe alternative care arrangements for their children
 - enact their family fire safety plan
 - know that children should not be left alone or in the care of older children
 - phone the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226 if necessary

(Refer to [Template letters for principals to use on FDR days](#) in the GARR School Closure Shared Drive)

Schools are advised to download the [Vic Emergency App](#) to maintain situational awareness, including any determination of Code Red conditions.

All school and early childhood facility closures and bus service cancellations are published on the Department website — refer to [Closures and Bus Service Cancellations](#)

Document Control

Date Approved:

Name: Principal – Ms Sharon Gillett

Signature: 

Date presented to School Advisory Council:

Author: Compliance Officer

Person Responsible for Implementation: Principal

Last amended:

Next Review Date:

Location Checklist:

- Staff Polices (SIMON)
- Students
- Parent Portal
- Website