

# Arrangements for the bush fire season

THIS INFORMATION IS ONLY FOR SCHOOLS THAT ARE ON THE BUSH FIRE REGISTER

Information for parents and carers

Updated September 2015

This brochure provides information for parents and carers about arrangements for the bush fire season. This information is only relevant for schools that are on the bush fire register.

## Introduction

The NSW Department of Education has conducted bush fire assessments for NSW government schools in bush fire prone areas. These results have been validated by an independent external expert and have been reviewed in consultation with the NSW Rural Fire Service.

A small number of schools have been identified as a school at increased risk if a fire were to break out on a day when a catastrophic fire danger rating is issued for the area that the school is located in. **This includes the school your child attends.**

To ensure the health, safety and welfare of students and staff, the Department has determined that on days when a catastrophic fire danger rating is issued for the area the school is in, the school will temporarily cease operations for the day(s) the rating is current and alternative learning arrangements will be put in place.

## What is a Fire Danger Rating?

A fire danger rating is the expected fire danger on a particular day and is determined by considering a combination of factors including air temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and drought. The ratings range from Low – Moderate through High, Very High, Severe, Extreme and Catastrophic.

## What is a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating?

A catastrophic rating means that if fires broke out they would be uncontrollable, unpredictable and very fast moving with very aggressive flames extending high above tree tops and buildings.

## When will I know if my child's school won't be operating the next day?

The State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) notifies the Department at approximately 4:30pm each day when there are catastrophic fire danger ratings predicted for the following day. This means that the school will only receive notification of a catastrophic fire danger rating after school hours the day before the forecast is issued.

Your school will notify you as soon as possible. You will be notified by telephone or other communication, depending on when the school is advised that the catastrophic fire danger rating has been issued. The school will not receive this information until after school has finished on the day before the rating takes effect. The school will contact all parents and carers and, where appropriate, issue advice through local media.

Please provide your current home or after hours contact to your school. Parents and carers should also watch or listen for local media as information may be provided through these outlets.

## What educational arrangements will be in place if the school isn't operating?

Talk to your school about the arrangements that will be put in place in the event of the school temporarily ceasing operations due to a catastrophic fire danger rating being issued. Schools will be undertaking advanced planning to ensure that, if schools do need to cease operations on some days, they will have

alternative educational arrangements in place such as re-locating to another school, where practicable, or providing take home work for students.

## Will my child's school be affected by severe or extreme fire danger ratings?

During the bush fire season, including days of severe or extreme fire danger rating, schools will continue to operate as normal unless advised otherwise by emergency services. During the bush fire season schools will be vigilant and monitor local conditions, particularly on days when severe or extreme fire danger ratings are issued.

## Plan and prepare

The NSW Rural Fire Service has resources for all residents to plan and prepare for the bush fire season. It is important that you consider the safety of your own home from bushfire. Please find more information and resources at: <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare>. See also the [My Fire Plan](#) website for resource.

## Further information

We appreciate your cooperation during the bush fire season. For further information about fire danger ratings and the bush fire season, please refer to the NSW Rural Fire Service website at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)

The Department's [School Safety website](#) has also been established to provide up to date information during bush fires and other situations such as floods or storms.