

Toolangi PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bushfire Preparedness Policy



Main Rd. Toolangi TEL: 5962 9255

Email: toolangi.ps@education.vic.gov.au Website: <https://www.toolangi.ps@education.vic.gov.au>

Policy Name	Bushfire Preparedness Policy	Approved	September 11th 2023
Responsibility	Sally Herbert	Review Date	September 2023

Rationale

To ensure the school community understands our school's approach to preparing for the bushfire and grassfire risk.

Aims

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.

Implementation

All registered schools, as a component of their registration, must comply with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) [Guidelines for Bushfire Preparedness](#).

Bushfire at Risk Register (BARR)

Schools around Victoria are at varying risk from bushfire. The Department's [Bushfire at Risk Register](#) (BARR) records the schools and early childhood services most at risk from bushfire.

Entry onto the BARR considers:

- [Bushfire Prone Area designation](#) - publically available map, built on a number of criteria that maps where fire can reach under Catastrophic conditions, and aligns to building controls
- [Bushfire Management Overlay](#) - triggers the need for a planning permit for certain developments and requires new developments to include appropriate bushfire protection measures
- [Victorian Fire Risk Register](#)- map assets at risk from bushfire and assess the level of risk to the asset
- terrain - influences the direction and speed at which a fire will travel
- fuel type exposure - vegetation type, i.e. forest, mixed, grass.

Schools on the BARR are further categorised based on their bushfire risk. The categorisation determines actions for individual schools on days of elevated fire danger and enables targeted treatments.

Toolangi Primary School has been entered on the BARR.

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. Toolangi Primary School's shelter-in-place building is the Art Room located next to the main building.

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The shelter-in-place building for BARR schools must be suitable to provide a temporary protective measure from a predicted ember and smoke attack from fire or other outdoor hazardous incident for the entire school population.

There are a small number of BARR schools that do not have a building that would offer an adequate level of protection in the event of a bushfire. These schools must identify alternate arrangements in their Emergency Management Plan.

Catastrophic day

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

Toolangi Primary School is on the BARR and listed as category 2 and must close on a determined **Catastrophic** day in our weather district.

The Region wherever possible, will:

- provide schools with four to seven days notice of a planned **Catastrophic** day closure
- confirm the final decision to close a school no later than 1.00pm the day before the planned Catastrophic day closure.

Ahead of the fire danger period, the school on the BARR must:

- advise our school community and site users that the school will be closed on any determined Catastrophic day
- complete the activities outlined in the [School Site Bushfire/Grassfire Readiness Review Checklist](#).
- Schools and early childhood services located near bushland must record their bushfire response procedures in their EMP, and Government schools must use an online EMP portal to do this. Refer to [Emergency and Critical Incident Management Planning](#).
- notify bus travellers and parents/carers that no school bus services will operate to or from a school closed on a determined Catastrophic day.

Before every Catastrophic day closure, schools on the BARR must:

- notify staff, parents/carers and other site users e.g. contractors, of 'potential' and confirmed closures
- check proposed camp and excursion venues located in forecast Catastrophic districts and update the [Student Activity Locator](#) with any cancellations or changes.
- No staff will remain on site and all out-of-school care programs (including vacation, before and after school programs) will not operate.

All school closures are published on the Department's website along with changed bus routes and/or bus service cancellations.

Fire in the landscape

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

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Resources

- CSPS Emergency Management Plan
- Emergency and Security Services Support

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the DET Recommended review cycle.

CERTIFICATION

This policy was ratified at the School Council Meeting held at Toolangi Primary School, on September 11th 2023.

Signed.....

School Council President

Signed.....

Principal