

# Bushfire Information for Parents – Code Red Schools

Following the tragedy of the Black Saturday fires across Victoria in 2009, the Victorian Education Department, along with the DSE, conducted a stringent analysis of bushfire risk to all kinders, childcare centres and schools.

**Invermay Primary School is one of more than 100 facilities that have been identified on a Victorian Bushfire Risk Register.**

\*\*\* A comprehensive list can be viewed at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/emergencies/bushfires/register.htm>

## What does this mean for students, parents and staff of Invermay PS?

- Schools, kindergartens and child care facilities at the highest risk of fire danger are placed on the DEECD's Bushfire At-Risk Register. Inclusion on this register is a trigger for the school, kindergarten or child care facility to pre-emptively close on days declared Code Red in their Bureau of Meteorology region.
- Schools, kindergartens and licensed child care centres that have been identified as being at high fire risk and on the Department's Bushfire At-Risk Register **will close on days declared Code Red.**
- The decision to close will not be made by school Principals or school based staff. The decision to pre-emptively close schools and children's services is made by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development based on warnings issued by the Bureau of Meteorology and in consultation with fire and emergency services.
- Where possible, up to 3-days notice of a planned closure will be provided to parents to enable child care arrangements to be made. Parents and carers should, however, expect that in some instances fewer than 3-days notice may be provided.
- Once the final decision to close is confirmed (no later than 12 noon the day prior) this decision will not change – regardless of any changes in the weather forecast. This will help limit confusion and help your family plan for how your children will be cared for when their school, kindergarten or child care centre is closed.
- Closure advice will be provided to you directly by your school, kindergarten or child care centre. A note and phone call should be expected wherever possible.
- When a school or children's service is advised to close on a Code Red day, no staff will attend school on that day or remain on site. All out-of-school care programs (including vacation, before and after school programs) will close.

***Invermay PS is a Code Red School and will be closed on Code Red declared days in our fire district.***

***Schools like Invermay PS who are on the Bushfire At Risk Register may also request special consideration for closure on days forecast to be EXTREME (one level below CODE RED). The Department of Education and Vic Emergency Management will consider these on a case by case basis, with approval being given before midday the day before, so that families may be appropriately notified.***

# Bushfire Information For Parents – Invermay PS

## What happens if an external fire threatens our school unexpectedly with staff and students in attendance?

If, for any reason, our school comes under threat on a day not declared Code Red and where students and staff are in attendance (ie: an unexpected localised grassfire on a mild day), our plan is to assemble all students in the junior school building. (which has many fire preventative features that are explained to students and staff at our fire drill sessions)

All staff members have allocated responsibilities in our school emergency plan (which are discussed and rehearsed during our fire drills) - including but not limited to student supervision, communications with parents, liaising with emergency services and the Education Department, First Aid & monitoring radio/internet updates.

Our message for staff, students and families is simple:

1. In the event of an unexpected external fire threat whilst staff and students are in attendance, we will assemble in the safest building in our school (jnr school building) and **will not evacuate unless advised by the emergency services officer in command.**
2. Whilst the Safe Meeting Point for Invermay community residents is the recreation reserve across the road from our school front, **our school will not rely on any one particular evacuation point. Any possible evacuation will be to a point and direction advised by the emergency services officer in command,** based on all available conditions and information at the time.
3. **In our plan, we ask that families endeavour not to continually call our school landline phone number for updates.** This will be our primary link with emergency services and the Education Department's Emergency Management team. IPS staff assigned to the family communications role will use mobile phones to contact parents/carers, particularly if an evacuation is required. Families could also seek updates on the following media:

Victorian Bushfire Information Line (VBIL) on freecall 1800 240 667.

Callers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech/communication impairment can call textphone/telewriter (TTY) on 1800 122 969.

CFA at [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au) Department of Sustainability and Environment at [www.dse.vic.gov.au/fires](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/fires)

Listen to ABC Local Radio, commercial and designated community radio stations or watch Sky News

4. **Students will be available for collection** at any time, but **only by their listed parent / carer or emergency contact.** We cannot release children with friends, neighbours etc who are not listed as an emergency contact in enrolment records.