



Iona College Geelong Emergency Management Plan - Code Red Procedure

About Code Red Days: What happens on a Code Red Day?

Schools, kindergartens and licensed childcare centres that have been identified as being at high fire risk and on the Department's Bushfire or Grassfire At-Risk Register, will close on days declared Code Red. Schools and services not on the Department's Bushfire or Grassfire At-Risk Register will remain open, unless directly threatened by fire or another emergency.

- Where possible, up to three days' notice of a planned closure will be provided; 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 at 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 families plan for how their children will be cared for when the college is closed.

- Advice will be provided to families by the Principal of Iona College Geelong.

When the college is closed for bushfire or grassfire risks, no staff will remain on site. No child should be left at home alone or in the care of siblings on high-fire danger days.

Bus transport

If a bus route is threatened by unexpected fire, the college will enact its Emergency Management Plan.

Information on changes to bus routes or cancellation of services will be provided by the college.

Off-site activities

The safety of students and staff is paramount and off-site activities may be cancelled, postponed or relocated if faced with the threat of bushfire.

Off-site activities include any activity undertaken by staff and students away from the college and can include camps, excursions, sporting activities and training or conferences for staff.

Code Red Day FAQs:

What is a 'planned closure'?

Schools identified as being at high-risk of bushfire or grassfire, will be pre-emptively closed on days declared by fire authorities as being a Code Red Fire Danger Rating.

Why is our school pre-emptively closing?

Where schools are at high risk, the safest option for staff and students is to close.

Who makes the decision to close our school?

The decision to pre-emptively close schools 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.

How will I know if our school is likely to close this fire season?

Schools considered to be at risk have been included on a Bushfire or Grassfire At-Risk Register and are informed of that inclusion. Further information on the register is available from [this website](#).

How much notice will I have if my school will be closed?

It is intended that families will be provided with as much notice as possible of a planned closure. However if unexpected weather patterns are experienced closures may happen on short notice.

The final decision to close the college will be confirmed no later than midday the day before the planned closure.

Families are encouraged to arrange alternative care for children in the event of a planned closure. No child should be left at home alone or in the care of siblings on high fire danger rated days.

Who will tell me that our school will be closed?

You will be informed via email, text message and/or telephone from the college. Information will also be published [on the VIC.GOV website](#).

What happens if the forecast changes?

If the Bureau of Meteorology or the CFA downgrades the risk forecast in the lead-up to a planned closure, the closure may be cancelled, and the college will be allowed to remain open.

The final decision to pre-emptively close will be confirmed no later than midday the day before the planned closure.

Once the decision to close has been confirmed, there will be no change – regardless of improvements to the weather conditions the following afternoon or overnight – this will help limit confusion and provide time for parents to make alternative care arrangements for their children.

What should my school-age child do if our school is closed?

Families are encouraged to arrange alternative care for children in the event of a planned closure. Given the expected severity of the weather conditions, children should not be left alone or under the supervision of older children.

Is it likely that my school will be closed for consecutive days? If yes, how will I know?

It is possible that the college will be closed for consecutive days. Information about ongoing closures will be published on [this website](#).

It is also anticipated that closures will be announced on ABC local radio. Wherever possible, the school will directly contact families.

On average, how many days does the Government predict that schools will need to close?

While it is not possible to provide the exact number of days, advice from the CFA and the Bureau of Meteorology suggests that schools in high fire risk areas could expect to close an average of 0-3 days a year.

In some years, there may be no days and more in other years.

When my school is closed, will any staff remain on site?

No. The safety of staff and students is our main priority. Schools have been advised that no-one should be allowed to remain on-site when their facility is closed due to high-fire danger risk.

Will there be circumstances where my school is closed but nearby facilities remain open?

Generally it is expected that most schools in high-risk areas will close on Code Red fire danger days. There may be some exceptions to this, for example, the characteristics of a particular school would lead it to stay open when others are closed. Due to the college being surrounded by grasslands, there is a high risk of grassfire surrounding the site. Other schools in the area are surrounded by residential buildings and therefore would remain open.

Can I keep my child away from school if I'm concerned about the risk of fires - even if my school remains open?

Absolutely. 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. However please advise the school as soon as possible of your child's absence.

My child travels by bus to or from school. Will bus routes be closed on high-risk fire days?

Yes. Bus routes passing through high-risk areas or routes operated by schools in high-risk locations will be closed on high-risk fire days.

A school bus route will be closed if it has to pass through an area affected by fire even if the associated school is not affected by fire and remains open.

If a bus route is threatened by unexpected fire, the school will enact its Emergency Management Plan.

Will school off-site activities (e.g. camps and excursions) continue to operate during bushfire season? What happens if my child's off-site activity is threatened by fire? Yes, off-site activities will continue throughout the year as they are an important part of school programs. The college will assess the likely threat of fire when organising off-site activities during the bushfire season.

If an off-site activity is threatened by fire, the college will enact its emergency management plan. Off-site activities in areas affected by a predicted Code Red day will be cancelled or recalled.

What else can I do?

- Keep your contact details current. This is most important
- Review and update your family bushfire survival plan (if required)
- Regularly check [the DEECD website](#) and [the VIC.GOV website](#) for more information about Bush/Grassfire preparedness and school closures.
- Look out for more information about activities your local community is planning
- Refer to the [CFA website](#).