



NSW Department of Education

# Bushfire season Information for parents

This brochure provides information for parents and carers about arrangements for the bushfire season. This information is only relevant for schools identified as Category 1 and in a bushfire prone area. These schools are required to temporarily cease operations when a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating is issued in their area.

## Introduction

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

A small number of schools have been identified as being at risk if a fire were to break out on a day when a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating is issued for their local area. This includes the school your child attends.

To ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of students and staff, the NSW Department of Education 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. Alternative learning arrangements will be put in place on these day(s).



## 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 to High, Very High, Severe, Extreme and Catastrophic.



## What is a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating?

A Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating means that if fires broke out they would be uncontrollable, unpredictable and very fast moving. For more information on Fire Danger Ratings, visit the NSW Rural Fire Service at – [rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fdr-and-tobans](https://rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fdr-and-tobans)



## Fire Danger Ratings?

During the bushfire season, including days of severe or extreme Fire Danger Rating, schools will continue to operate as normal unless advised otherwise by emergency services or the department. During the bushfire season, schools will be vigilant and monitor local conditions, particularly on days when severe or extreme Fire Danger Ratings are issued. Any school may be asked to proactively temporarily cease operations based on advice from the Bureau of Meteorology on Fire Danger Rating predicted conditions, and advice from NSW RFS on current bushfire activity.



## 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 4:00pm 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 contact all parents and carers and, where appropriate, issue advice through local media.

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



## What education arrangements will be in place if the school isn't operating on site?

Talk to your school about the arrangements that will be put in place in the event of the school temporarily ceasing operations. Schools will be undertaking advanced planning to ensure that if they do need to cease operations on some days, they will have alternative educational arrangements in place. This may include re-locating to another school, where practicable, or students learning from home.



## Plan and Prepare

The NSW Rural Fire Service has resources for all residents to plan and prepare for the bushfire season. It is important that you consider the safety of your own home from bushfire.

Find more information and resources on [NSW Rural Fire Service – rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare](https://rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare)



## Learn more

We appreciate your cooperation during the bushfire season. For further information about Fire Danger Ratings and the bushfire season, please refer to [NSW Rural Fire Service – rfs.nsw.gov.au](https://rfs.nsw.gov.au)

The department's School Safety website [education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/school-safety](https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/school-safety) has also been established to provide up to date information during bushfires and other situations such as floods or storms.

Get in contact with your school if you have any questions.