



UPWEY SOUTH
Primary School

Emergency Management Information for Families

At Upwey South Primary School, we are committed to continuous improvement for our learning community.

As a Victorian government school, we required to review and update our **Emergency Management Plan (EMP)** annually.

Therefore, as part of our annual EMP review, we are providing members of our learning community with a quick reference guide to assist in your understanding of our environment and our emergency management procedures.

This guide provides you with:

- possible emergency scenarios which may require a school to enact its Emergency Management Plan
- actions specific to our school, when enacting our Emergency Management Plan
- information about the Bushfire at Risk Registry for Victoria

Please use this guide to familiarise yourself with the actions we are taking to provide a safe learning environment for our students.

Should you require further information, please speak with the Principal, or visit the Department of Education (DET) Reference Guide online @

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/pages/emergencies.aspx>

Kind regards,

Damien Kitch

Principal



Possible Emergency Scenarios

What is classified as an emergency?

When we refer to the term emergency in this document, we are referring to *“an incident which impacts directly upon the daily operations, welfare and/or safety of the school community”*.

The possible list of emergencies which may be faced by our school are many and varied, and can occur both during and out of school hours.

The reason for these emergencies can occur naturally, (such as weather related events) or can occur due to human action (such as a vehicle accident).

The impact of these emergencies can also vary; impacting at an immediate school level, neighbourhood level, local area level, or even state level.

How often should schools practise enacting their EMP?

Schools should practise enacting their EMP at least once per term (four times per calendar year). Each practice drill should focus upon a different scenario, in order for the school to assess its preparedness to manage differing situations.

Will I be informed when Upwey South Primary School has a Practice Drill?

Yes. You will be sent an electronic communication from the school.

Five school days prior to the enactment of a Practice Drill; we will inform families of the type of drill being practised, and possible discussion points which you may like to raise with your child.

On the day of a Practice Drill; we will inform families of the type of drill we practised, and possible discussion points which may be raised by your child.



What type of emergencies does the EMP refer to?

Given the variety of emergencies which can occur in a school, our Emergency Management Plan (EMP) categorises the possible situations into two major categories:

Evacuation: *this is a situation in which people must vacate a building or premises for their own safety.*

- **Some possible scenarios:**
 - fire/smoke posing a threat within a certain building/ buildings
 - an animal/ person who poses a threat within a certain building
 - a structural/electrical/ climate or other fault posing a threat within a certain building
 - flooding/ wind/ or associated storm damage posing a threat within a certain building
 - health/ sanitation threat within a certain building

Lockdown: *this is a situation in which people must limit their movement around the school, and stay away from a given location for their own safety. This situation may involve people having to vacate a building, or vacate an external area of the school beyond the buildings. During a lockdown, all people within the school grounds are directed to remain in a given location.*

- **Some possible scenarios:**
 - the vacating of a certain area of the school due to fire/smoke which poses a threat to people within the immediate area
 - a traffic accident in the immediate area, which poses a threat to people within the immediate area
 - an animal/ person who poses a threat to people within the immediate area
 - a weather event which poses a threat to people within the immediate area
 - health/ sanitation threat which poses a threat to people within the immediate area
 - a localised emergency which poses a threat to people within the immediate area (such as a neighbourhood situation involving damage to utilities/ surrounding infrastructure)



During a real emergency, what type of information is shared with students?

During a real emergency, the Principal as the Chief Warden (or a designated Incident Controller) will determine what information is relevant to be shared directly with students.

As a school, we are aware that emergency situations may cause raised levels of anxiety, curiosity and questioning, which can be different for each student.

Discussions held with students will be age-appropriate, and provide students with the information which is required in order for them to be aware of the actions they are required to take in order to promote the safety and welfare of themselves and those around them.

In certain situations, the Principal will make the decision not to share with students the details of the emergency, as it may be deemed unnecessary to the promotion of their ongoing welfare.

During a real emergency, what type of information is shared with parents?

During a real emergency, the Principal as the Chief Warden (or a designated Incident Controller) will communicate with parents via an electronic communication.

Information regarding the details of the emergency will be shared with parents, in consultation with local emergency services and DET emergency management services.

Where is the School Evacuation Point?

The **Primary Evacuation Point** for our school is the school hall. This has been selected, as it provides an area in which containment is more achievable in a real emergency situation.

At times, dependent upon the type of emergency and *if access to the school hall presents a danger*, our Primary Evacuation Point may move to the school oval. This area of the oval is indicated by a green emergency sign next to the scoreboard.

When an evacuation occurs, all people on-site will be assembled and supervised at an agreed point; where they will await further instruction from the Chief Warden.

The **Secondary Evacuation Point** for our school is the Riley Road carpark. *This is only used in a situation when access to the school hall or oval is unsafe.* When utilising the Secondary Evacuation Point, all access to and from the carpark will be limited.

In extreme measures, if we are required to evacuate the school premises, our **Off-Site Evacuation Point** is the Upwey South Tennis Club. *If this site is utilised it will be done with the direct consultation and assistance of local emergency services.*

Where is the School Shelter-in-Place?

The **Shelter-in-Place** for our school is the school hall/ gymnasium. If there is an external emergency/ threat, all people on-site will be assembled and supervised in the shelter-in-place; where they will await further instruction from the Chief Warden.



Bushfire Information

Is Upwey South Primary School listed as under threat from bushfires?

Upwey South Primary School is located in the picturesque Dandenong Ranges region of Victoria, which is one of the most fire-prone areas within Australia. Due to our geographical location, our school is listed on the Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR).

What is the Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) ?

The BARR is a list of sites across Victoria, which have been identified as at an increased risk of exposure to bushfires.

Schools, kindergartens and child care facilities at the highest risk of fire danger are placed on the Department's BARR. 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 district.***

For more information and an alphabetical listing of BARR sites, visit:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/bushfirerisk.aspx#subU>

What happens on a Code Red Day?

Schools and early childhood services not on the Department's BARR will remain open, unless directly threatened by fire or another emergency.

Schools and early childhood services that have been identified as being at high fire risk and on the Department's BARR will close on days determined Code Red by the Emergency Management Commissioner.

Where possible, four to seven days' notice of a planned closure will be provided. Parents and carers should expect that in some instances fewer than four days' notice may be provided.

Once a Code Red day has been determined by the Emergency Management Commissioner 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 or early childhood service is closed.

Advice will be provided to you directly by your school or early childhood service.

When a school or early childhood service is closed due to a Code Red day determination, no staff will remain on site and all out-of-school care programs (including vacation, before and after school programs) will not operate.



What happens if a school or service is only potentially closed?

If your school or early childhood service is listed as potentially closed on the school and service closure list, you should start planning for alternative care arrangements for your child in the event that the planned closure proceeds. The final decision to close a school or early childhood service will be confirmed no later than 1.00pm the day before the planned closure. This decision will not change, irrespective of an improvement in the weather forecast. No child should be left at home alone or in the care of siblings on high-fire danger days.

For more information visit **Code Red Days in DET Schools** @

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/pages/coderedabout.aspx>

What are the guidelines for schools on the BARR?

A school must ensure that the care, safety and welfare of students is in accordance with any applicable State and Commonwealth laws and that staff are advised of their obligations under those laws.

Schedule 4 Clause 12 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017

In relation to bushfire preparedness and in addition to specified requirements for schools to provide for the care, safety and welfare of students, schools must meet the guidelines as set out by the Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

These can be found online @ <https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/schools/Pages/bushfire-preparedness.aspx>

Where can I find out more information about the steps being taken by DET schools for bushfire preparedness?

To find out more information visit:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/bushfireprepare.aspx>

*Please refer to the attachment over page for more information.

Newsletter article: Bushfire At-Risk Register - Schools

School procedures for the bushfire season

Fire danger ratings and warnings are used in Victoria to provide clear direction on the safest options for preserving life. Schools and children's services listed on the DET Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) will be closed when a Code Red fire danger rating day is determined in their Bureau of Meteorology district. **Our school has been identified as being one of those at high bushfire risk and is listed on the BARR.**

Where possible, we will provide parents with up to four days notice of a potential Code Red day closure by letter and Compass. A Code Red day will be determined by the Emergency Management Commissioner no later than 1.00 pm the day before the potential closure. Once we are advised of the confirmation of the Code Red day we will provide you with advice before the end of the school day.



Once confirmed, the decision to close will not change, regardless of improvements in the weather forecast. This is to avoid confusion and help your family plan alternative care arrangements for your child. It is also important to note that:

- No staff will be on site on days where the school is closed due to a forecast Code Red day.
- Out-of-school-hours care will also be cancelled on these days
- School camps will be cancelled if a Code Red fire danger rating day is determined for the Bureau of Meteorology district in which the camp is located.
- Depending on which Bureau of Meteorology district is impacted bus route cancellations may affect our school.

On these Code Red days families are encouraged to enact their Bushfire Survival Plan – **on such days children should never be left at home or in the care of older children.**

For those of us living in a bushfire prone area, the Country Fire Authority (CFA) advises that when Code Red days are forecast, the safest option is to leave the night before or early on the morning of the Code Red day.

What can parents do?

- Make sure your family's bushfire survival plan is up-to-date and includes alternative care arrangements in the event that our school is closed.
- Ensure we have your current contact details, including your mobile phone numbers. Keep in touch with us by reading communications sent out from the school.
- Most importantly at this time of year, if you're planning a holiday or short stay in the bush or in a coastal area, you should check warnings in advance of travel and remain vigilant during your stay.
- If your child is old enough, talk to them about bushfires and your family's bushfire survival plan.
- You can access more information about children's services closures on the Department of Education and Training website – see <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/pages/closures.aspx>

For up-to-date information on this year's fire season see:

- <https://emergency.vic.gov.au> Facebook ([facebook.com/cfavvic](https://www.facebook.com/cfavvic)) Twitter (twitter.com/CFA_Updates) ABC local radio, Sky News and other emergency broadcasters; VicEmergency Hotline (1800 226 226)