



# Chairo Christian School

## Bushfire Emergency Management Information

### Introduction

Chairo has developed these procedures, following consultation with relevant agencies, in order to deal appropriately with the risk of bushfire. The school will monitor the declared fire risk in our regions, and other areas where students may be present if off campus, based on the Fire Danger Rating Index. We will also receive notification from government sources of any declared risk levels of extreme or above.

### School Response to a Code Red Declaration

On days declared as Catastrophic (Code Red), all Chairo campuses are likely to close due to their locations and the extent of the high risk areas our buses travel through each day. It is expected that notification of declared Code Red days will allow time for written communication of a closure to be distributed to parents and guardians in advance via students. Notification will also be communicated on the school website.

Some staff members will be in attendance at the Drouin Campus during a closure and the office will remain open. If there's sufficient time, students will be given directions of work that could be done during any closure. Once a campus closure has been announced, but the Fire Danger Rating is subsequently downgraded, the campus may be reopened if sufficient notification can be given to parents and guardians. Again, updates would be provided via the school website.

### Attendance on Extreme Heat Days

Unless notified otherwise, the school will operate as normal on days of extreme heat. However, a number of heat management procedures will be implemented, including restricting external student activities, conducting activities in air conditioned spaces, and reminding students of the need to drink water regularly. The majority of rooms at each campus are now air conditioned.

While we would encourage attendance, it is at the discretion of parents and guardians whether or not their children attend school on days of extreme heat. This is a decision that should be made in accordance with a family's individual bushfire safety plan. If parents and guardians choose not to send their children to school, it is essential that the school is notified on the day.

### Fire Close to a Campus

Should a fire emergency threaten a Chairo campus while students are in attendance, students will be moved to pre-determined safe zones on the campus, or off site if necessary. The school has developed an evacuation plan for each site. If there is no danger to students, or the threat passes, classes will then resume as usual.

If required, the following evacuation locations will apply:

- Drouin East and Drouin campuses will evacuate by bus to Community Church Warragul (corner of King & Wills Streets)
- Pakenham Campus will evacuate to the Pakenham Salvation Army Hall (Bald Hill Road)
- Leongatha Campus will evacuate to Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College (Horn St) or to the Presbyterian Church (corner of Turner & Bent Streets)
- Traralgon Campus will evacuate to the vacant lot located opposite the campus on the corner of Liddiard Road and Hunter Road.

During an emergency, parents and guardians are *not* encouraged to attend the school due to congestion and safety concerns, and students will not be dismissed unless the situation is deemed safe. In the event of an evacuation, parents and guardians will be asked to collect their children from the evacuation centre.

## **Fire Impact on Bus Services**

The school operates buses in a number of areas that have experienced bushfire danger. During high risk times, the school will monitor bushfire websites. Our bus routes are also on a State register, which is monitored by authorities to provide warning of bushfire activity. On a day where there is a bushfire or extreme bushfire risk, the phone at the Drouin Campus (5625 4600) will be manned after-hours to ensure communication between home and school as necessary.

The school will communicate with the bus provider should information be received regarding a bus route being affected by bushfire. If the bus is already on the route, the bus provider will contact the driver. The school will determine the location of all bus students and contact parents and guardians of students who cannot be transported to their bus stop to advise where they can be collected.

If adequate notice is received during the school day regarding one or more bus routes being affected by bushfire, the impacted bus or buses will be cancelled and parents and guardians notified to collect their children from school. If a bus has already left the school but needs to be cancelled due to bushfire, personnel at bus interchange locations will be notified and advised that students are to remain on the bus. The driver will be instructed by the bus provider to transport the students to the most appropriate local secondary school, where they will be accounted for and supervised until collected by parents and guardians.

## **School Website and Parent Communication**

This information will be available on the school website at [www.chairo.vic.edu.au](http://www.chairo.vic.edu.au) and further information will be added during times of extreme heat or emergency if required. Parents and guardians are encouraged to refer to this as an initial point of reference.

As outlined above, written communication to parents and guardians will also occur when possible, and communication via SMS, email and telephone may also be used when practical and deemed necessary. Parents with any queries regarding the information provided above are welcome to contact campus receptions.