BUSHFIRE PREPAREDNESS POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

(a) that both Thornton and Nayook campuses of Rubicon Outdoor School are listed on the Departments Bushfire at Risk Register (BARR campuses).
(b) on days of Catastrophic fire danger, closure advice will be provided by the respective Department of Education (DE)regional office. The DE website will also list all potential and actual closures of schools.
(c) that during the event of a fire, or threat of fire impacting school operations, Rubicon Outdoor School's Emergency Management Plan (EMP) will be activated.
(d) how information is provided to staff and students whilst on program at Rubicon during the declared fire season.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school operations during the declared fire season and also when conditions outside this time pose a risk of bushfire.

POLICY

Bushfire At-Risk Register

Schools such as Rubicon that are at the highest risk of fire danger are placed on the Department's Bushfire At-Risk Register. Inclusion on this register is a trigger for Rubicon Outdoor School to pre-emptively close on days declared Catastrophic fire danger in their identified Bureau of Meteorology district.

For information regarding closures of schools, see the department's Emergency Closures page. For general information regarding emergencies or Catastrophic fire danger days, see the Department's Emergencies page.

Catastrophic Fire Danger Day

Both Thornton and Nayook Campuses are on the Department's bushfire at-risk register and will close on days determined Catastrophic 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 Catastrophic day has been determined by the Emergency Management Commissioner this decision will not change – regardless of any changes in the weather forecast. No staff will be onsite on a Catastrophic fire danger day.

NB: Thornton or Nayook campuses are located in different districts; therefore it is possible that the school may still be operation from one campus whilst the other is closed due to a Catastrophic day determination in that campuses' Bureau of Meteorology district.

Nayook Campus

The school's Nayook Campus is categorised as Category 1 on the BARR, this means that this site is considered to be at the highest risk from bushfire. This categorisation means that the site:

• will relocate, or close in accordance with their pre-approved plan on a day of forecast Extreme FDR for their LGA; and

• will be required to close on Catastrophic days in their fire weather district.

Thornton Campus

The school's Thornton Campus is categorised as Category 3 on the BARR, this means that this site is at increased risk of grass fire, this categorisation means that the site:

• will be required to close on Catastrophic days in their fire weather district.

Emergency Management Plan

The purpose of the school's Emergency Management Plan (EMP) is to provide a detailed plan of how each school campus will prepare and respond to emergency situations. This EMP applies to all staff, students, visitors, contractors and volunteers at this school campus. There is an EMP located in the reception of each campus and in various other locations next to phones.

EMP- Bushfire/Grassfire

- Call 000 for emergency services and seek and follow advice.
- Report the emergency immediately to the Chief Warden who will convene the IMT if necessary.
- Determine appropriate response strategy (evacuate or shelter-in-place) in consultation with emergency services, if possible.
- Check that all students, staff, visitors and contractors are accounted for.
- Inform the Rubicon Principal – **0418 823 002**
- Report the emergency to the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) on 1800 126 126
- Listen to TV or local radio on battery-powered sets for bushfire/weather warnings and advice.
- Ensure staff and students do not hinder emergency services or put themselves at risk by going near damaged buildings or trees.
- Notify your region and seek advice from your regional Manager, Operations and Emergency Management if required.
- Direct all Media enquiries to **DET Media Unit on 9637 2871.**
- Contact parents as required.
- In the event of a catastrophic determination prior to the occurrence:
    - O make sure you close all doors and windows
    - O turn off power and gas.

See EMP for specific fire rating actions.

Rubicon Outdoor School Local Fire Planning Procedure

Prior to all programs being conducted in a high fire danger period the Principal or Campus Principal, will assess the current fire risk in the area using the indicators below, and notify staff of any required changes if required. In addition to this, Pre-Activity Checks will include assessment of the parameters below and are to be completed by class teachers daily, throughout the year, these are considered alongside other sever weather parameters determined by the school.

Fire Danger Assessment Parameters

- Total fire Ban
- Temperature 30 degrees or greater
- Wind speed 30 km/hr or greater
- Fire Danger Rating 30 or greater
- Existing fire within 60 km's of activity venue

If the *Fire Danger Assessment Parameters* meets 1 or more of the above indicators the risk is considered high and programs may need to be altered, moved to a new venue, or cancelled in part or full. These changes need to be reflected in the Pre-Activity Check, Trip Intentions and on Student Activity Locator.

In the event of a program being altered as a result of these parameters the visiting school will be notified as required and Rubicon's internal daily precautions will include the following:

- 'Weather' to be included on all staff meeting minutes agenda as a regular item.
- "30, 30, 30, 60" bushfire rating system to be included in all relevant activity management documents. Eg. Bushwalking
- "30, 30, 30, 60" bushfire document displayed in front office with website links for up to date weather information.
- Display fire danger rating in office reception area
- Circulate our procedure to relevant bodies. Eg DET, local CFA, local DELWP via the EMP

Bushfire & Weather information

www.bom.gov.au - Weather information, observations, Meteye and forecasts

http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/forecasts/fire-danger-ratings.shtml fire index

https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/total-fire-bans-and-ratings

Vic emergency - List of current and past incidents

FFMV - Has quick links to fires today, controlled burns in progress and planned burns for the next ten days

ABC local radio- Bushfire emergency updates

COMMUNICATION

Visiting teacher: will be briefed soon after arrival on the EMP in the event of a fire

Students and visiting teacher: will also be briefed each morning of days of high or extreme fire danger. This will occur at 9:00 as part of assembly/roll call.

BRIEFING NOTES:
Today is listed as a day of _____ fire danger.
Timetables may/will be changed
These changes may/will include;

- Outline any activities being cancelled, changing, or ending earlier.

There is a possibility that in the event of a fire you may not be able to return to this campus as expected.

If you are called to a meeting, please stop what you are doing and come straight away. At that meeting you will be provide with information on what to do, what to collect and where to go.

Please ensure you have any medications with you.

We request that staff and students do not use your mobile phones as we do not want the lines or the CFA overwhelmed. A communications officer will be identified to support you.
Items not being taken with you should be left on the floor in your rooms.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- EMP for Thornton and Nayook Campuses
- C:\Users\09448791\OneDrive - VIC - Department of Education and Training\Rubicon Directory\04_Safety_and_Emergency_Management\03 Emergency Management
- https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/bushfire-and-grassfire-preparedness/policy
- https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/bushfire-and-grassfire-preparedness/resources

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Created/reviewed date	December 2022 / Reviewed Aug 2025
Endorsed by	Andrew Monson, Principal
Endorsed on	8th August 2025
Next review date	August 2026

Print the following page for front office

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