



# Bushfire Season Procedures

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Fire danger ratings and warnings in Victoria aim to provide clear direction on the safest options for preserving life. Schools and children's services identified as being at high fire risk will be closed on days declared by fire authorities to be Code Red.

**Lavalla Catholic College has not been identified as being at high fire risk**, so we will **not** be closed on a Code Red day. In reality, the school is a safer place than many of our families' homes, some of which are located in fire-prone areas.

While our school has not been identified as being at high fire risk, offsite activities such as excursions, camps and field trips, are planned to occur during the fire season. If such activities are considered to be at risk from fire, they will be rescheduled or cancelled.

Our school is well positioned to respond to emergencies, including an unpredicted breakout of a fire or a known fire unexpectedly changing course. If this occurs, our school's emergency management plan will ensure that we respond to the threat in a timely and appropriate manner.

As part of preparing for the fire season, we have completed the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria's (CECV) self-assessment of our emergency preparedness. We have also reviewed our emergency management plan and conducted maintenance works aimed at helping reduce the threat of fire.

In the unlikely event that fire threatens the school, the staff and students will be evacuated from classrooms to a safe refuge, consistent with our emergency management plan. The College's SMS messaging service will be the primary media used to inform families of critical incidents such as fire threats should they occur. We will also send emails and place information on the main page of our website, but this will only be done after sending an SMS. Accordingly, if you have changed your mobile number and have not updated the College you are asked to do so by sending an email to [registrar@lavalla.vic.edu.au](mailto:registrar@lavalla.vic.edu.au).

If, at the end of a school day, fire activity prevents parents/guardians from being available for their children, parents/guardians should make alternative arrangements for the supervision of their children, e.g. to go stay with a family member or friend. In the event that such alternatives cannot be arranged, volunteer staff will supervise students for a time at school in the St Paul's Campus ISC. Students at Kildare campus will be transported by the College to the St Paul's Campus by 4.30pm. By evening, if it appears that the children will need to be accommodated overnight, they will be taken to an emergency relief centre by the school staff, as directed by the **Latrobe Council Management Response Team**. The Incident Controller and Municipal Emergency Response Co-ordinator (Victoria Police) are the only **authorised personnel** that can authorise an evacuation. They will advise of an emergency relief centre when it is deemed safe to do so. Details of the centre will be notified via SMS, email and placed on the website when it is released. These centres are normally setup in either Traralgon, Morwell or Moe depending on circumstances ***as part of the Latrobe City's emergency management processes***. These will be staffed by people with responsibility for supervision and care of children without parents or guardians.



Parents are reminded that if students are to be collected prior to the normal end of day time that the children are to be signed out in the usual manner. If another person is required to pick up your son(s) and daughter(s) we require that they be registered with us as an emergency contact person or if an alternative person is required we be contacted by telephone or preferably email of this arrangement.

***What can parents do?***

Make sure the College has your current contact details, including your mobile phone numbers. These should be sent to the College Registrar by email - [registrar@lavalla.vic.edu.au](mailto:registrar@lavalla.vic.edu.au) .

Keep in touch with us by reading *our Newsletter*, by checking our website: [www.lavalla.vic.edu.au](http://www.lavalla.vic.edu.au) and by talking to your child's Learning Adviser or other members of the staff.

We suggest that you talk with your children about bushfires and your family's bushfire survival plan, particularly if you live in or are planning trips to fire-prone areas.

On days of high fire risk, children should never be left at home unattended or in the care of older children.

You can access more information about bushfires and schools on the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria's (CECV) website [www.cecv.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au) .

For up-to-date information on this year's fire season, visit the Victorian Government Emergency website at [emergency.vic.gov.au](http://emergency.vic.gov.au) or call the **24-hour VicEmergency Hotline** on **1800 226 226**.

**John M Freeman**  
Principal