

Moama Anglican Grammar Code Red or Catastrophic Fire Danger Day Policy

As a School located on the border of Victoria and NSW, Moama Anglican Grammar has developed a Code Red and Catastrophic Fire Danger Day Policy to ensure the School has a plan in the case of a either warning being declared for Moama and surrounding areas.

A fire danger rating of 'Code Red' is the highest level of rating in Victoria. It signifies the worst conditions for grass or bushfires. A Code Red fire danger rating means that if a fire were to start:

- it could be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving
- fire services will find it difficult to put out
- there is a high likelihood that people in the path of a fire will be killed or seriously injured
- many homes are likely to be destroyed -- even the best prepared homes may not be safe
- leaving the night before a Code Red Day or early in the morning of a Code Red Day is the safest option for your survival

A fire danger rating of "Catastrophic" in NSW is similar to the Victorian Code Red Fire Day.

Victorian Schools and early childhood services on the Bushfire At Risk Register (BARR) will be pre-emptively closed on days that are determined by the Victorian Emergency Management Commissioner as having a Code Red Fire Rating. A similar register and strategy exist in NSW. Moama Anglican Grammar is not one of the schools on the register, however our students and staff travel from rural areas which could be impacted by bushfires. Our first priority is the safety of our students and staff.

For this reason, when either a Victorian Code Red Fire Danger or a New South Wales Catastrophic rating be declared in the immediate or surrounding areas, Moama Anglican Grammar will close for the day.

How much notice will be provided if Moama Anglican Grammar will be closed?

It is intended that families will be provided with as much notice as possible of a planned closure once an announcement is made by relevant authorities. However, if unexpected weather patterns are experienced, closures may happen at short notice. Wherever possible the final announcement made by authorities no later than 1.00pm the day before will determine our school's the planned closure. The School will communicate the details of the closure to our community via email and social media.

What happens if the forecast changes?

If the Bureau of Meteorology downgrades the risk forecast in the days leading up to a planned closure, the closure may be cancelled and the school will remain open. The final decision to close the School will be confirmed no later than 1.00pm the day before the planned closure. Once the decision to close has been confirmed, there will be no change – regardless of improvements to the weather conditions the following afternoon or overnight. This will help limit confusion and provide time for parents and guardians to make alternative care arrangements for their children.

What should my school age child do if School is closed?

Families are encouraged to ensure that their bushfire survival plans include alternative care arrangements for children in the event of a planned closure. Given the expected severity of weather conditions, children should not be left unattended or under the supervision of older children.

On average, how many days may the Grammar be likely to close due to Code Red days?

The exact number of days cannot be predicted; however, it should be noted that these days are very rare. A Code Red day was declared in November 2019, which was the first time since 2010.

When Moama Anglican Grammar is closed, will any staff remain on site?

Yes. A small number of the leadership staff will be available to care for any children who arrive, until their parents or guardians can pick them up. However, the safety of children, staff and the community is our main priority and should a bushfire threatened the School, any students, staff or community members present will be evacuated to the closest evacuation centre in Moama.

Can I keep my child away if I'm concerned about the risk of fires – even in the School is open?

Yes. If your family decides to enact its bushfire survival plan, the most appropriate place for your child may be with you and your family, and not at school. Please advise the School as soon as possible of your child's absence.

My child travels by bus to school. Will bus routes be closed on Code Red days?

Similar to facilities that pre-emptively close on determined Code Red days, bus routes servicing these schools will also be closed on Code Red days. Bus routes from schools not on the Victorian Department's Bushfire At-Risk Register that enter high-risk areas will also pre-emptively close.

Will School off-site activities (e.g. camps and excursions) continue to operate on high-bushfire risk days? What happens if my child's offsite activity is threatened by fire?

Offsite activities in high bushfire risk areas, affected by a predicted Code Red day will be cancelled or rescheduled. Moama Anglican Grammar will assess the likely threat of fire when organising off-site activities during the summer fire season. If an off-site activity is threatened by fire, Moama Anglican Grammar will enact its emergency management plan.

What else can I do?

- Ensure Moama Anglican Grammar has your current emergency contact details
- Review and update your family bushfire survival plan
- Download the VicEmergency and/or the NSW RFS Fires Near Me Mobile App
- Stay up to date during periods of increased fire danger and when there is a bush fire in the local area. You can do this by:
 - Knowing the Fire Danger Rating (FDR) for your VIC or NSW Fire Area (especially on hot, dry and windy days)
 - Actively monitor information on fire activity through TV, radio and the relevant websites (www.rfs.nsw.gov.au and www.cfa.vic.gov.au)
 - Be on alert for warnings such as Bush Fire Alert Levels
 - Watch for signs of fire, especially smoke or the smell of smoke
 - Call the RFS Bush Fire Information Line on 1800 NSW RFS (1800 679 737) or CFA1800 240 667

Note: this document is adapted from the VIC Country Fire Authority Code Red and NSW Rural Fire Service Fire Danger Ratings web pages along with the VIC Registration and Qualifications Authority Guidelines for Bushfire Preparedness;

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/bushfire-and-grassfire-preparedness/policy?Redirect=1>.

Useful contact Numbers and Websites

- For all emergencies - call 000
- Moama Anglican Grammar 03 5480 5900
- Murray River Council Local Area Emergency Coordinator – Scott Barber 0428 245 485.
- Storms, floods and tsunamis [NSW State Emergency Services](#) 132 500
- Bush fire related incidents [NSW Rural Fire Service](#) call 1800 NSW RFS (1800 679 737)
- <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/resources/factsheets>
- <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/resources/schools>

**Principal
Moama Anglican Grammar**