Rationale:

Due to the potentially devastating effects of bushfire, certain schools have been placed on the Bushfire At-Risk Register, with added implications for planning and provisions surrounding the event of a bushfire. Concongella Primary School is on the Bushfire At-Risk Register.

New school procedures for the bushfire season:

The way schools in Victoria respond to bushfires has been revised.

New fire danger ratings and warnings have been introduced in Victoria to provide clear direction on the safest options for preserving life.

Concongella Primary School has been identified as being at highest bushfire risk and as such, will be closed on days declared by fire authorities to be Code Red.

Where possible, we will provide parents with up to three days’ notice of a planned closure. We will contact you directly by letter with advice on planned closures and will confirm the decision to close by 12 noon the day before the planned closure.

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.

No staff will remain on site when the school is closed by the risk of fire. We will also cancel any offsite activities (such as school camps and excursions) and out-of-school care if the activities are at risk. There may also be changes to school bus routes. Depending on routes, this may also occur on days when the school is not closed.

On high fire risk days families are encouraged to enact their Bushfire Survival Plan – on such days, children should never be left at home unattended or in the care of older children.

For those of us living in a bushfire prone area, the safest option when a Code Red day is declared is to leave the night before, or early in the morning of the Code Red day.

As part of preparing our school for the threat of fire, we have completed the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s self-assessment of our emergency preparedness.
Procedure:

If a bushfire occurs during school hours:

- Identify location of fire;
- Consult with CFA;
- Make a decision;
  - If safe to do so, contact parents to come to pick up children;
  - If the fire is too close for evacuation procedures - proceed to lock down fire procedures in the office building:
    - All students and staff in the office, shutters down.
    - Await response/ advice from CFA,
    - Contact parents when safe to do so and when all children are accounted for
    - Contact region when safe to do so.
- FIRST PRIORITY IS TO PRESERVE LIFE

If a bush fire occurs out of school hours:

- Act upon advice given by CFA;
- Contact Parents with advice;
- Contact region.

Resources:

Concongella Primary School’s Emergency Management Plan


For up-to-date information on this year’s fire season, visit the CFA website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au or call the 24-hour Victorian Bushfires Information Line on 1800 240 667.