February 3, 2016

Dear Parents,

The Department of Education and Training in association with Emergency Management Victoria have worked closely to develop new policy to provide further options for schools on Extreme Fire Danger Rating (FDR) days.

As our school is listed on the Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR), this new policy may impact our school community and it is important that you are aware of it.

Currently, all government schools and early childhood services listed on the BARR are required to pre-emptively close where a Code Red FDR day has been determined.

This new policy provides us an option to relocate or close our school if an Extreme FDR day places our school at too great a risk.

We are currently in the process of updating our school’s Emergency Management Plan to incorporate this new policy.

A decision to close or relocate the school will not be taken lightly and will be done so following close consultation with our regional office and Emergency Management Victoria.

Schools are some of the safest places in our community during extreme weather. Approval for closure or relocation will only be granted in circumstances where students and staff would be at greater risk remaining at our school.

If our school was to enact a relocation or closure, notification will be given to the entire school community no later than 3.00pm the day prior to the forecast Extreme FDR day.

We are consulting with our school council and others in our school community on how to best incorporate this policy into our Emergency Management Plan. We will be in further contact once our plans have been finalised.

If you have any questions or wish to provide input into our emergency planning, please feel free to contact our office.

Kind regards,

Kym Peterson

Principal

Gembrook Primary School