

Halvorson, Sara S

From: Bowes, Carolyn L
Sent: Wednesday, 19 February 2014 2:18 PM
To: Hanratty, Pete M; Joustra, Christopher J; Rock, Melissa A; Reid-Metcalf, Michelle M
Cc: O'Rourke, Kevin J; Anderson, Mark A; Allman, John JA; Cain, Karen L
Subject: Letter to parents_schools_not relocatedF doc.docx
Attachments: Letter to parents_schools_not relocatedF doc.docx

Hi everyone

Please find attached draft letter to parents which requires your personal input prior to sending out today. If you have any queries, please contact Dean Mann on 0412 232 531

Regards

Advice from principals to parents - for schools not temporarily relocating

Dear parent / guardian

As you know, the smoke from the fire in the coal mine has become worse. The fire is unlikely to be put out for several weeks, maybe longer.

Our main concern is the health and safety of the children and staff at our school.

The Department of Health has advised that exposure to smoke can affect people's health – especially children, older people, pregnant women, smokers and people with asthma or heart disease.

Please let us know if your child has an existing medical condition, such as asthma. It is very important they take their medication.

We will seek immediate medical help for any child who is suffering from a health problem, as we normally do.

The Department of Health has told us that children attending schools and early childhood centres on or south of Commercial Road (closest to the mine) should be temporarily moved to other facilities to give them a break from the smoke.

At the moment, the Department of Health has said we don't need to relocate, so we will remain open on our usual site. We will let you know straight away if anything changes.

[Optional statement] We are investigating opportunities to rotate some of our classes to locations outside of Morwell to provide our students with some relief from the local conditions. We will keep you informed.

We are currently doing several things to reduce the impact of smoke at our school. We are:

- reducing active activities so children are not over exerted
- keeping them inside as much as possible.
- Ensuring all our windows and doors are closed and air conditioners are on 'recycle air' or turned off if they cannot recycle air.
- Airing out the facility when there are clear breaks in the smoke.

Some families are considering whether to move out of town for a while. If you do, please let us know. It's important we know where your child is and when they are expected to return to us. Please also ensure that we have your up-to-date contact details.

I encourage you to continue to send your child to school as normal, but if your child is away, please talk to your child's teacher about school work they could do while absent.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) is monitoring the situation very closely with the Department of Health and, if it necessary, the Department will support other schools to temporarily relocate.

In addition to air monitoring currently being conducted by the Environment Protection Authority, DEECD will also test and monitor the air quality at our school.

We will provide updates you as they become available. In the meantime, if you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me on

Yours sincerely,

[insert NAME]

General support

- **Nurse on Call** - 1300 60 60 24 (this is a phone service that allows you to discuss any health related issue with a registered nurse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for the cost of a local call from anywhere in Victoria).
- **EPA Victoria** on 1300 372 842 (24 hours) or visit: www.epa.vic.gov.au
- **Department of Health** - More information on the health effects of smoke, or on the use of water from rainwater tanks contact 1300 761 874 (during business hours) or go to www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/bushfires.htm
- **Asthma Foundation** - www.asthma.org.au or call 1800 278 462
- **Latrobe City Council** - call 1300 367 700 or go to www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/Home
- Victorian Bushfire Information Line: Freecall 1800 240 667. (Callers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech/communication impairment can call via 1800 555 677)
- **VicEmergency** website: www.emergency.vic.gov.au
- **CFA Social Media**: Facebook ([facebook.com/cfavic](https://www.facebook.com/cfavic)); Twitter (Twitter @ CFA_Updates)