FAQs:

National Summer Briefing for School Leaders and Education Representatives

Have the AusAlert thresholds been organised with the states and territories? Will we see an AusAlert at the same time as a TasAlert warning, or equivalent?

AusAlert is now operationally ready and available for jurisdictions to use as an additional channel for communicating emergency information to the public. Under the AusAlert National Operating Protocols, each state and territory determines which communication channels are most appropriate based on the operational situation. As a result, AusAlert may be used alongside existing jurisdictional warning systems, depending on the circumstances.

Is there guidance on when AusAlert will be used? Are alerts tied to systems such as VicEmergency warnings? Can people opt out, particularly in situations involving domestic and family violence?

AusAlert has two alert categories:

- **Critical Alerts:** Used for the most severe emergencies. These cannot be disabled. The only way to avoid receiving a Critical Alert is to switch the device off or place it in aeroplane mode.
- **Priority Alerts:** These can be disabled through mobile device settings. If a device is set to silent or "Do Not Disturb", it will not vibrate or sound for Priority Alerts.

The appearance of alerts may vary depending on the device and operating system. To support people experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV), NEMA worked with DFV peak bodies, including Wesnet, and broader DFV stakeholder networks to develop guidance and safe phone resources. These resources, including Easy Read versions, are being distributed through organisations that provide safe phones.

Participant comment: It is also important for schools to have a process to communicate with their families about what to do if their children are at school and they receive an Aus Alert.

AusAlert has developed specific resources for children and young people that schools can use to support communications with families and students.
Find out more here.

For more information, reach out to us at:
Prepare&Care@headspace.org.au

FAQs:

National Summer Briefing for School Leaders and Education Representatives

Is there a set temperature where schools are not allowed to let students outside?

There is no nationally consistent temperature threshold for restricting outdoor activities. Policies vary by state, territory and, in some cases, by education sector.

Schools should follow guidance issued by their relevant education authority and implement an appropriate extreme heat management plan. Advice specific to Queensland can be found here and more general advice can be found here.

Victoria already has a thunderstorm asthma forecasting system. Is there an intention to expand this capability nationally to provide schools with timely, location-specific warnings?

Pollen and thunderstorm asthma remain active areas of research. Victoria experiences a higher risk than most other parts of Australia due to specific pollen types and environmental conditions.

Thunderstorm asthma warnings are generally managed by state health departments, which use Bureau of Meteorology and other data to issue warnings and public advice. As such, forecasting systems are not necessarily delivered as a Bureau of Meteorology product. Information and warning services are available through several state health departments, including Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales.

Are the headspace Psychological First Aid sessions online?

Psychological First Aid can be delivered online or in person. The Prepare & Care team are offering 3 online sessions for school leaders across dates in November and December. You can register for those sessions here.

For more information, reach out to us at:
Prepare&Care@headspace.org.au

Links and Resources

AusAlert Resources

- AusAlert website: https://www.ausalert.gov.au/
- Priority and Critical Alerts information: https://www.ausalert.gov.au/receiving-alert/priority-and-critical-alerts#critical-alert
- How to turn your device off or use aeroplane mode: https://www.ausalert.gov.au/how-to-aeroplane-mode-or-device-power
- Priority Alert settings and opt-out information: https://www.ausalert.gov.au/receiving-alert/turning-alerts-off
- Children and teens resources: https://www.ausalert.gov.au/community-resources/children-teens

Heat and Extreme Weather Resources

- Queensland Department of Education: Managing excessive heat in schools: https://education.qld.gov.au/students/student-health-safety-wellbeing/student-health/managing-excessive-heat-schools
- Education Daily: Building an extreme heat management plan for schools: https://educationdaily.au/discoveries/how-to-build-an-extreme-heat-management-plan-that-actually-protects-your-students/

Thunderstorm Asthma Resources

- Victoria Department of Health: Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma Risk Forecast: https://www.health.vic.gov.au/environmental-health/epidemic-thunderstorm-asthma-risk-forecast
- SA Health: Thunderstorm Asthma Information: https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/pollen/thunderstorm+asthma
- NSW Health: Thunderstorm Asthma Factsheet: https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/thunderstorm-asthma.aspx

Applying Psychological First Aid Training

- Link to register for Applying Psychological First Aid Training: https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/applying-psychological-first-aid-4887944/

Additional Resources

- Bureau of Meteorology: Explaining Long Range Forecasts (YouTube Playlist): https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbKuJrA7Vp7ki8SkarXux33sT6r3Wdpis
- Australian Climate Service: National Climate Risk Assessment: https://www.acs.gov.au/pages/national-climate-risk-assessment
- Birdie and the Very Hot Day (Queensland Centre for Perinatal and Infant Mental Health): https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/our-work/birdies-tree-natural-disaster-recovery/birdies-tree-storybooks/birdie-and-the-very-hot-day

For more information, reach out to us at Prepare&Care@headspace.org.au

headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation is funded by the Australian Government.