



"To Live, To Love, To Grow In Christ"

HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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CYCLONE POLICY

**Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School
Out of School Hours Care
Community of Learners**

Rationale

The cyclone season runs from November 1st to April 30th of each year. On average two to three cyclones per season form in the waters surrounding the Northern Territory, including the Timor and Arafura seas and the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The number of cyclones that affect coastal areas vary every year and can differ in intensity. While the danger of a direct hit on an area from a severe cyclone is low, at least one category three or higher storm affects Territory waters most cyclone seasons.

Policy

Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School will be prepared before the start of the cyclone season for the possibility of a cyclone striking sometime in the following six months.

Cyclone advice is broadcast on all radio stations by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) well in advance of a cyclone arrival. ABC Darwin is the primary station to listen to for most current updates, and the Secure NT Facebook page. Early notices are referred to as a Cyclone Watch and as the chances of a cyclone hitting increase, it will be upgraded to a Cyclone Warning.

- **Cyclone Watch and Act**

A Tropical Cyclone Watch and Act is an advice issued every six hours when there are indications that gales or stronger winds are expected to affect coastal or island communities within 48 hours but not within 24 hours. It details the communities expected to be affected and gives a brief estimate of the cyclone's location, intensity, severity category and movement.

- **Cyclone Warning**

A Tropical Cyclone Warning is an advice issued every three hours when there are indications that gales or stronger winds are expected to affect coastal or island communities within 24 hours. As well as information provided in a watch advice, warning instruction also inform of expected maximum wind gusts. Forecast of heavy rainfall, flooding and abnormally high tide are included where necessary.

When a cyclone is under radar surveillance close to the coast, hourly advice may be issued. The BOM has an area devoted to cyclones on its website and this is an important source of information.

Tropical Cyclone Outlook statements are issued daily by the bureau at www.bom.gov.au/weather/nt/cyclone/

These present three-day outlooks on possible tropical cyclone development in the region and surrounding areas. Please note that the BOM also has an app which can be downloaded onto phone/tablets.

Tropical Cyclone Information Bulletins are issued every six hours if a tropical cyclone exists within the Territory region but is not expected to threaten any coastal or island communities within the next 48 hours. Bulletins include the cyclone's name, current location and its forecast movement.

Catholic Education Northern Territory Cyclone Plan

Where a cyclone is imminent, with the possibility of school closure, the Director of Catholic Education will advise Principals of their respective schools. Where this occurs staff will be notified following procedures and parents/carers informed. All members of our school community will be reminded to listen for updates and notifications through local radio, television and Secure NT Facebook page.

If and when conditions deteriorate after the Cyclone Warning, school closures will be announced on local radio and television. If no further deterioration occurs, school closure will not occur.

Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School will be directed from Catholic Education Office; we will not decide independently to close the school.

In the event of Darwin being placed on a Cyclone Warning overnight, follow the advice provided on local radio, television and Secure NT Facebook page. The cyclone information update number is 1300 359 211.

Parents are permitted to collect children if they are concerned before an official school closure has been announced. (Where children are collected early, they are to be signed out by the parent from their respective learning area (front office, COL or OSHC).

If parents are unable to collect children themselves, they must advise who will do so to our staff. (All parent contact details, including current emergency contact details are to be provided to our front office).

In the event of a cyclone being imminent during Vacation Care/Community of Learners, same procedures apply as identified above. Local media is the best way to be kept informed of updates and procedures in place.

CYCLONE PROCEDURE

Procedures

Holy Spirit Catholic School procedures are consistent with normal processes used by schools in the Darwin Region.

Preparation of Cyclone Season

School staff will prepare for the cyclone season each October by:

Cyclone potentially threatens before the beginning of the school day

- At times the Department of Education may decide to close schools prior to the school day beginning if a cyclone is within striking distance of Darwin. This information will be widely communicated through local media. School community members should listen to the radio if a cyclone warning is possible
- When the Department of Education or the NT Government closes Government Schools, Catholic Education NT will automatically follow the course advised. Principals in their respective schools will be informed by Director of Catholic Education, NT. This information will then be shared with school our community.

The purpose of this prior notice of school closure is to avoid the problem of having students in school during a time when a cyclone or adverse weather could affect the operation of schools during that day.

Cyclone potentially threatens after the beginning of the school day

In the unlikely event of a situation occurring where we need to close schools after a school day has commenced, there is a clear plan as set out below.

- When a School Closure instruction is given by the NT Government during a school day, decisions will be communicated to the Director of Catholic Education, NT and forwarded immediately to school Principals.
- When a cyclone is imminent, the principal will convene meeting with staff leadership as well as supervisors of Community of Learners and Out of School Hours Care. Information and required responsibilities will be directed during this time.

The safety of everyone is paramount during cyclone season:

- Children are not permitted to leave the classroom/learning areas unless accompanied by an adult.
- Children are to be collected from school by parent or authorised adult. Collection must be documented with students being signed out from front office or respective centre (COL or OSHC).
- No child is permitted to leave school grounds until collected and signed out by parent or authorised adult from their respective centre (front office, COL or OSHC).
- Parent contact details, including emergency contacts to be provided to front office and kept up to date.
- Students still remaining an hour after official notification will be gathered into a central point (staffroom) where staff executive will supervise and phone parents awaiting their collection
- Where official notification has been identified and informed through school/media it is imperative that all students are collected within this hour. (Where the warning warrants immediate evacuation (within the hour), students and staff will move directly to Cyclone Shelter).
- Children are not permitted to leave the school on their own following the issue of a warning and they are to remain in the care of parents until the all clear is issued by the BOM and notification issued by Department of Education.
- Announcements will be made on radio stations and parents or other designated persons will collect students from their respective classroom/learning areas/centres.

- In the event of children not being collected within one hour of school closure, students will proceed to the staffroom where a senior/executive staff member will be on duty. Arrangements will then be made for remaining students to be transported to nearest Cyclone Shelter. Where the warning warrants immediate evacuation (within the hour), students and staff will move directly to cyclone shelter.
- Our closest emergency cyclone shelter is located at Casuarina Shopping Centre – undercover carpark
- The office staff will stay tuned to local media for important updates. The progress of the cyclone will also be monitored on Bureau of Meteorology website (www.bom.gov.au – phone 1300 659 211)
- Children and staff should not return to school until advised by the media to do so.

Cyclone potentially threatens during Vacation Care/Community of Learners

Procedures remain the same as identified through policy. Our supervisors of respective centres will be kept informed of process and procedures.

Scope

The policy applies to all staff of Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School with special responsibility given to particular officers of the school including Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Director (COL), Out of School Hours Coordinator (OSHC), Groundsman and Administrative staff.

Please ensure our front office has all current contact details for all students

Responsibilities

The school Leadership team:

- Widely promoting the policy to Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School community, especially new staff and students and their parents/carers
- Monitoring and evaluating the policy every three years (or as required) to assess progress on implementing objectives and action plans

Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School Staff:

- Being familiar with the policy and procedures, as well as their roles

Parents:

- Being familiar with and supporting implementation of the Cyclone Policy and Procedures
- Ensuring that our front office have relevant and up to date contact details in the event of a cyclone

Students:

- Being familiar with the procedures and following the instructions of staff at all times

Evaluation

This policy is flexible in nature to ensure it suits the context and the fluidity of the school environment. While flexible, adjustments made must be in consultation with Principal/Deputy Principal. This policy will be reviewed as deemed necessary as part of the School Strategic Plan.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by School Board in November 2022

Review

This policy will be reviewed 2025