Extreme Weather Policy

Rationale

Systemic Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney are committed to providing safe and caring environments for students, staff and parents.

This policy clarifies procedures and protocols for extreme weather events such as heat waves, high wind and electrical storms.

Policy

Extreme Heat:

From time-to-time, forecasters warn of a very hot day with temperatures sometimes exceeding 40 Degrees Centigrade.

There is no particular temperature at which schools are required to close. In practice, it would be impossible to ensure duty of care to all students if it were decided to close after the commencement of the school day. Closing before the commencement of the school day is also unreliable and requires absolute dependence on weather forecasting. Alternatively, there are a range of flexible approaches to normal school practices that can assist in hot weather, which include:

- Rotating class use of air-conditioned facilities where available;
- Varying normal teaching programs through the use of shady and cool outdoor facilities;
- Providing more readily accessible water bottles or similar facilities in classrooms and playgrounds.
- Alternating time-tables or programs to avoid physical activity or the use of equipment that may generate heat.
- Postponing sporting or physical education activities that might stress students or expose them unnecessarily to the sun.
- Using fans or other devices in an appropriate way to remain cool.
- Enforcing school policy for playground or other outdoor activities and encouraging students to wear a cap while outside.

High Winds:

In the event of high winds being forecast the leadership team will monitor the situation and take the following actions on a needs basis to ensure the safety of students:

- Close areas under trees to minimise the risk of falling branches injuring a student
- In the event of extreme wind, close all areas around trees to ensure safety and notify students via the public address system to exercise extreme care when moving around the college, staying under veranda’s where ever possible when moving between classes.
Ensure regular checks are made by arborists as to the health of trees on College property and follow their directives for the removal of branches/trees.

**Electrical Storms**
In the event of an electrical storm, the following arrangement will be carried out subject to the conditions being presented. When thunder and lightning occur:

- Close all areas where trees are located.
- Remove all students from and close the oval.
- Ensure all students are under cover or inside a room, protected from harm until the storm passes.

**Bases of Discretion**
In exceptional circumstances, Principals should contact the school’s Regional Consultant to discuss other possible alternatives.

**Evaluation and Review**
This policy was reviewed in September 2014.