INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

School Board Policy Number Seventeen
Philosophical Basis

St Brigid’s Catholic School aims to provide a ‘safe’ environment for students, staff, families and visitors. At times, weather conditions can deteriorate rapidly and place people on our school grounds in unsafe situations. The Inclement Weather Policy provides procedures which will maximise the safety of every person on our school site.

Mandatory Provisions

Inclement Weather:

**HOT WEATHER PROCEDURE ~ Recess/Lunchtime**

St Brigid’s Catholic School does not close because of hot weather. All classrooms and general purpose learning areas across the school are air conditioned.

When the temperature on any given day at 10.55am or 12:45pm is 36 degrees or more:

- Inclement Siren will ring and students will remain inside their classrooms supervised by the duty teacher. Teachers will share supervision duties according to the designated roster.
- During Hot Weather Days the Connection Room will not be open.
- Students must seek permission to go to the canteen from their duty teacher. A staff member will be on canteen duty.
- Students are not to be sent to the canteen after 11.15am or 1:20pm.

**WET WEATHER PROCEDURE ~ Recess/Lunchtime**

When moderate/heavy rainfall is evident at 10.55am or 12:45pm:

- Inclement Siren will ring and students will remain inside their classrooms supervised by the duty teacher. Teachers will share supervision duties according to the designated roster.
- During Wet Weather Days the Connection Room will not be open.
- Students must seek permission to go to the canteen from their duty teacher. A staff member will be on canteen duty.
- Students are not to be sent to the canteen after 11.15am or 1:20pm.

Note:

If the weather clears before 11:10am or 1.20pm a normal siren blast will signal that students can go out to play – teachers resume normal yard duty.

Consultation will occur across the school if the school grounds or an area within the school grounds are too wet and not suitable for students to play. Staff will be informed if this occurs via PA system message.

If the person on duty in the Front Office observes that it is raining the bell would be rung to signal wet weather. Front office person to inform Leadership teams.

**BUSHFIRES**

Bushfires pose a threat to the whole community, including schools and preschools. Our school community needs to be prepared for bushfires.

St Brigid’s Catholic School will not be closed on high fire risk days of forecast catastrophic (Code Red) bushfire weather conditions.

However, St Brigid’s students travel on Government School buses which may be closed during catastrophic fire ban days. School bus services travelling through the affected Fire Ban District will be cancelled.

Parents will be advised of school closures the day before forecast catastrophic weather conditions and will need to make alternative arrangements for their children.

ABC Local Radio will broadcast advice on the evening before any closures.

St Brigid’s Catholic School is situated in the Mount Lofty Fire Ban District

**Bushfire Management Plan**

- Establish an Emergency Response Team.
- Identify a Safe Refuge building.(Classrooms)
- Schedule training for staff and students.
- Continually review Emergency Response Plan.
- Listen to the local radio or TV for bushfire/weather warnings and advice.
- Liaise with Catholic Education SA.
- Liaise with CFS, MFS and SA Polcie re safety intensions for staff and students.
- Notify parents/caregivers of the impending lockdown and bus route cancellations.
- Call together the site’s emergency response team to implement emergency procedures.
If time permits
- plug downpipes and fill all roof gutters with water.
- Check taps are working.
- Fill all available containers with water.
- Hose down walls, gardens on the side facing the fire front and leave sprinklers operating.

Ensure the safety of the group
- Move everybody inside, close all windows and doors and block crevices, cracks and gaps.
- Notify the SA Fire Service (CFS or MFS) if fire breaks out in the school grounds or adjacent to it.
- Stay inside, clear of windows, until the main fire front passes (usually 10 – 20 minutes).
- Do not leave the building until authorised and advised to do so by the SA Emergency Services.
- If safe, have staff extinguish small fires which may have started in or near the buildings.
- Have fire fighting equipment checked, maintained and ready to use.

FLOOD
Immediate action
- Respond to warnings received from the radio or TV and local authorities.
- Liaise with Catholic Education SA
- Call together the site’s emergency response team to implement emergency procedures:
  - Prepare for the predicted hazards (strong wind, torrential rain, electrical storm) by;
  - referring to emergency plans for previous flood levels and potential dangerous locations.
  - securing buildings, furniture, equipment, chemicals, fuels and other facilities.
  - removing floatable objects and material that could become airborne.
  - taping windows in “X” fashion and securing other glass structures.
  - turning off gas and electricity
  - collecting first aid kit(s).
  - checking that the portable radios have fresh batteries.
  - collecting backup disks.

Follow instructions given by:
- SA Ambulance Service
- SA Fire Service
- electrical supplier
- gas supplier
- insurance companies
- local government
- SA Police
- State Emergency Service.

Ensure the safety of the rest of the group
Make sure that people are at a safe location by:
- sending people home if sufficient warning is given (for students there must be a carer at home).
- organising accommodation for people who cannot get home.
- finding emergency shelter if outdoors – not under a tree.
- keeping people away from windows and skylights if strong winds are predicted.
- moving people to high ground if flooding is predicted.
- Activate prearranged plans for the release of staff whose property is threatened.
- Check with SA Police for safe routes before driving anywhere.
- Assess building damage and evacuate if dangerous.
- Check before moving outside for damage to neighbouring buildings, fallen power lines, fallen branches, debris and local flooding.

Follow up actions
Notify relevant stakeholders
- Contact Catholic Education SA.
- Inform parents/carers/next of kin of people who are directly involved.
- Keep listening to the local radio and heed all warnings and advice.
- Return workplace to normal routine as soon as the “all clear” is given by the appropriate authority – SA Police/State Emergency Service/SafeWork SA/Facilities Manager.
- Do not use storm or flood-damaged equipment until it has been checked by a qualified person.
- Seek support from counsellors and social workers as appropriate.
- Review and modify emergency plans and training procedures for dealing with storms/floods where necessary.

ELECTRICAL STORM
Electrical storms are not the most dangerous disaster, but may still present a danger. In order to remain safe during an electrical storm, it is important to prepare before a storm, know what to do during a storm, and take proper action after a storm.

Before an electrical storm:
- Look for dark, towering clouds
- Distant lightning or thunder
- Have the following supplies on hand:
  - Flashlight
  - Radio
  - Extra batteries
  - First aid kit
  - Essential medications
Check for things that may be hazardous
- Dead trees can fall during the storm
- Check for fire hazards
- Be prepared for a severe thunderstorm watch/warning to be announced

A severe thunderstorm watch is announced by the Bureau of Meteorology when thunderstorm conditions are likely to develop.

Locate a safe place to watch the skies and television, or listen to the radio for additional information.

A severe thunderstorm warning is announced when a significant risk is present. The danger is serious and imminent so locate a safe place and turn on a battery powered radio for more information and for an “all clear” signal.

During an electrical storm:
If Indoors:
- Remove or secure objects outside that may become airborne or cause injuries.
- Shutter windows securely and brace outside doors.
- Listen only to battery powered radios
- DO NOT use electrical appliances, phones, etc.
- Avoid sources of water with metal pipes because lightning can flow through the pipes.
- If Outdoors:
  - Take shelter in a building
  - If no structure is available reach an open, low area and squat down. Do not stand near tall, lone trees or stand up in a flat open area.
  - Avoid tall structures like power lines, towers, tall trees, etc.
  - Stay away from natural lightning rods (e.g. metal equipment)
  - Stay away from bodies of water
  - If you are on an isolated, level area and feel your hair stand on end and/or a tingling feeling, bend forward and put your hands on your knees. Do not lay flat on the ground. When you feel this, it means lightning is about to strike.
  - During a thunderstorm, there is a possibility of hail. Hail can range from pea sized to softball sized pieces of ice. Hail can be very destructive to structures, cars, and crops.

After an electrical storm:
- Provide CPR if the person has stopped breathing or if their heart has stopped.
- Report and avoid downed power lines.

Basis of Discretion
When students and staff are involved in external learning events i.e. sports carnivals, camps, excursions etc, a decision will be made by the Leadership Team, in collaboration with key staff, to discern the impact of potential weather conditions on the safety of students.

At all times, the expertise of the Bureau of Meteorology will be acknowledged and utilized to ensure the safest decision can be made to maximize student safety.

Resources
- Bureau of Meteorology
- www.bom.gov.au/weather/
- CFS
- Catholic Education SA

Evaluation
It is expected that the Inclement Weather Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

It is anticipated that this will occur every four years.

Appendix
- Evacuation Plan
- Lock Down Plan
- Sun Smart Policy