



Emergency Closures Policy

Introduction

The school policy on emergency closures was drafted as a whole school exercise, involving parents, pupils, staff and Board of Management. It was circulated to the entire school community in 2017 and will be posted on the school website in due course.

Rationale

The need for the school to produce a policy on emergency closures in recent years is primarily due to:

- Inclement weather, such as heavy snowfalls, high winds etc.

Relationship to School Ethos

Our Lady's Boys National School strives to provide a child friendly, secure environment catering for all the needs of all students as far as is practicable and where respect is fostered in a culture which values diversity and difference.

Aims and Objectives

- To provide for the welfare of all pupils and staff while on the school premises
- To ensure a safe, child friendly school environment is available to all children
- To comply with Health and Safety legislation

Procedures

Heavy Snowfall

In the event of a heavy snowfall, the Principal shall consult with the Chairperson of the BoM as soon as is feasible, and a decision will be made as to whether it is in the interests of all parties to close the school. Consultation will also be made with the Girls National School.

If it is decided to close the school, the school authorities will contact the parents via 'Text a Parent'.

All bus operators servicing the school will be contacted by the Principal or another designated person, confirming that the school will not be opening. If the snowfall is prolonged over a number of days and the school is closed indefinitely, parents and bus operators will be informed of re-opening dates by 'Text a Parent'.

Disconnection of Services

Where water or electricity services to the school are to be disconnected, a week's notification is normally given to the school authorities. This enables the school to furnish the parent body with the relevant advance warning of such closures via circular or text.

Critical Incident/Death

In some instances the school might remain closed for pupils in the event of a critical incident or death of a staff member, BoM member or pupil. Parents are informed of such closures either by circular or text. In this particular instance, the school may remain open to staff and BoM or Parents Association if issues such as church services, guards of honour, readings or counselling is required (See Critical Incident Policy).

Roles and Responsibilities

Emergency closures in the school place particular responsibilities on various personnel within the school chain of command. These include;

- Positive school community feedback
- Compliance with Health and Safety legislation
- Maintaining a safe school environment for all staff, children and parents

Ratification and Communication

This policy has been in operation in the school since 2013 having been communicated by the then BoM by means of circular following ratification at the school BoM meeting.

Implementation and Review

The redrafted policy has been implemented since January 2018 and will be reviewed in the light of unplanned events that lead to unscheduled school closures, but not later than 2020.