

# Severe Weather / Hurricane Preparedness Policy (4.8)

Good Days Adolescent Special Needs Center, LLC – Fort Myers, FL

## Purpose

The purpose of this Severe Weather / Hurricane Preparedness Policy is to safeguard the well-being of students, staff, and families at Good Days Adolescent Special Needs Center (GDC) through proper preparation, communication, and response procedures in the event of severe weather, including hurricanes, tropical storms, or tornadoes.

## Section 1: Policy Statement

GDC is committed to maintaining a safe environment by preparing for severe weather events through staff training, emergency planning, and coordination with local authorities. This policy ensures continuity of care and timely communication with families during weather-related emergencies.

## Section 2: Monitoring and Early Warning

The Director or designee will monitor weather conditions via official sources such as the National Weather Service (NWS) and local emergency management agencies. Families and staff will be notified of potential closures, delays, or emergency procedures as soon as advisories are issued.

Communication methods include:

- Text and email alerts to staff and families.
- Updates posted on the Center's website and social media platforms.
- Recorded voicemail message updates at the Center's main phone line.

## Section 3: Preparedness and Planning

GDC maintains a Severe Weather / Hurricane Emergency Plan outlining roles, responsibilities, and evacuation routes. Staff receive annual training to ensure familiarity with emergency procedures and safety expectations.

Preparedness measures include:

- Regular inspections of emergency supplies and first aid kits.
- Securing outdoor equipment and signage before storms.
- Maintaining updated emergency contact and medical information for all students.
- Identifying designated safe interior areas for shelter-in-place procedures.

## Section 4: Facility Closures and Evacuations

If Lee County schools or government offices close due to severe weather, GDC will also close for the safety of students and staff. In the event of an evacuation order, the Director will coordinate an orderly closure and ensure all students are released to their parents or guardians.

- Families will be notified immediately of closures or early dismissals.
- Staff will assist in securing the facility and ensuring all individuals have exited safely.
- Essential documents and electronic records will be backed up and stored securely.

### **Section 5: Shelter-in-Place Procedures**

If evacuation is unsafe or not possible, GDC will implement shelter-in-place procedures to provide protection within the facility.

Shelter-in-place procedures include:

1. Moving all individuals to designated safe interior rooms away from windows.
2. Closing doors and securing the area.
3. Maintaining communication with emergency management agencies.
4. Using available emergency supplies until the threat has passed.

### **Section 6: Post-Storm Recovery and Reopening**

After a severe weather event, GDC will assess the facility for damage, safety, and accessibility prior to reopening. The Director will consult with local authorities and building inspectors to confirm readiness for resuming operations.

- Reopening announcements will be communicated through text, email, and the Center's website.
- Any repairs or cleaning will be completed before students return.
- Staff will review and debrief procedures to identify areas for improvement.

### **Section 7: Communication and Family Coordination**

Parents and guardians are responsible for maintaining updated contact information and providing alternative emergency contacts in case of evacuation. GDC will make every effort to ensure prompt and clear communication before, during, and after a severe weather event.

### **Section 8: Staff Responsibilities**

All staff are expected to participate in emergency preparedness training, assist with storm readiness, and follow assigned duties during closures or emergencies. Staff must remain calm, organized, and prioritize student safety at all times.

### **Section 9: Emergency Supplies**

The Center will maintain emergency kits containing flashlights, batteries, first aid materials, bottled water, non-perishable snacks, medications (as needed), and communication devices. Kits will be inspected and restocked every six months.

## **Section 10: Acknowledgment**

All staff and families must review and acknowledge this Severe Weather / Hurricane Preparedness Policy during onboarding or enrollment. Acknowledgment is documented through the Policy Acknowledgment Form (E1).

Approved: December 2025

Next Review: December 2026