








-  1800 317 545
-  www.holyspiritcollege.qld.edu.au
-  office.holyspirit@cns.catholic.edu.au
-  @hscCooktownandCairns
-  Holy Spirit College Cooktown and Cairns

Principals Welcome



Welcome to Holy Spirit College. This booklet has been developed to assist parents, guardians and community organisations to understand the important and transformative work undertaken by Holy Spirit College on behalf of Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns.

Holy Spirit College is a no-fee learning environment that is democratic, relational, safe and inclusive; providing an alternative approach to education for young people aged 12-18 years old that have not experienced success in mainstream education settings. This document is a summary of the beliefs, practices and processes that underpin our work in supporting disengaged and at-risk youth to reengage with their learning journey in the uniquely supportive environments of Edmonton (Day School), Manoora (Day School) and Cooktown (Day School and Boarding).

Holy Spirit College may very well be a potential solution to some of the life issues that may be facing a young person in your care. We are heavily invested in providing the very best environment for providing a trauma informed education pathway for our young people including further conventional learning opportunities such as a return to Secondary Education, Certificate Courses, TAFE and Traineeships. We also cater for young people who wish to leave school to contribute to their community through work-related goals like volunteering, work experience, apprenticeships, traineeships, or just getting a job.

At Holy Spirit College learners and staff are expected to work together guided by the philosophy of 'common ground' a concept that emphasises power with and not power over. This work is brought to life through the Holy Spirit College Operation By Principles (OBP) framework, where the principles of Right Relationships, Respect, Responsibility and Participation provide the structure for transformative conversations and collective decision making within the College. We believe that every young person can learn, having unique strengths and gifts, that when identified, can be built upon so that they can contribute

to their community in a meaningful way.

It is my sincere hope that you find within the uniqueness of the caring, trauma informed, relational focused philosophies of Holy Spirit College, an environment where your young person cannot just survive but thrive.

Lucas Felstead
College Principal



Vision

With GuGu, Wulungulbor, our Holy Spirit family welcomes young people from diverse backgrounds to empower them to be the best versions of themselves through providing meaningful learning opportunities for personal growth.

GuGu: Guugu Yimithirr -spending time with God/prayer/spiritual relationship/conversation and connection

Wulungulbor: Gimuy-Walubarra Yidi - God



Purpose

With the aspirations of the young people at the centre of our work, Holy Spirit College seeks to promote the spiritual, cultural, social, emotional, academic, and physical growth of those for whom a mainstream education is not currently accessible. Guided by trauma informed best practices and the love of Christ, Holy Spirit College provides a space where young people are welcomed with unconditional regard, utilising Individual Learning Plans (ILP) to pursue each young person's life aspirations.



Operation By Principle (OBP)

Central to the Gospel is the foundational belief that **each person is made in the image and likeness of God**. From this world view Holy Spirit College has developed four key principles that inform all aspects of college life, including **a consistent and powerful language for developing greater learner awareness and control of their social and emotional development**.

These four core principles are:

RELATIONSHIPS

RESPECT

RESPONSIBILITY

PARTICIPATION

The principles inform how members of the Holy Spirit College community interact with each other cultivating positive, genuine, meaningful working relationships between staff, young people and their families. It is through these principles that we work to develop more connected, caring and capable young people.

Young People Agreement

In many ways, Holy Spirit College is **an adult learning environment for young people** who may have grown up too fast, struggling with the notion of rules and people telling them what to do. We understand this, and that is why we walk alongside our young people following the philosophy of common ground. For this to work for any young person, they don't have to love learning, but **they must want to come to college and be prepared to respect the rights of others**. To ensure the safety of our young people and staff, a part of the enrolment process for all learners includes agreeing to and signing a Young Person Agreement. This document provides clarity around behaviours that jeopardise our community safety and therefore membership within the community. As a college, we don't have rules, but we do need to be a safe place for all.



Learning & Teaching

Holy Spirit College **provides educational pathways** designed to engage the disengaged through individualised learning plans that transition each young person to better life outcomes in health, well-being, academic education, training and employment. Each young person will have a different journey and transition pathway which may include a transitional pathway from disengagement:

- **towards achieving a level of qualification**
- **to work readiness through vocational training, traineeships, apprenticeships or other employment**
- **from remote communities towards a successful introduction to mainstream boarding school environments**
- **into the care of Allied Health and community support agencies**
- **back to mainstream schooling**

As each young person is unique, having different needs and aspirations, goals are developed specific to the individual through the development and continual review of Individual Learning Plans.

Holy Spirit College utilises a **multi-disciplinary approach** in providing learning experiences **to meet the diverse learning needs of our learners**. The intention of the learning experiences/sessions at Holy Spirit College is to **empower young people** to develop their personal capabilities and responsibilities to achieve and access educational and/or employment opportunities. Therefore, our work initially aims to develop 'ready to learn' skills. This is achieved through the provision of a highly modified college timetable that promotes opportunities for **movement, engagement** with the outdoors, self-exploration and expression through the Arts and timetabled student wellbeing check-ins.

For those young people already proficient in these 'ready to learn' skills, and are age equivalent to year 10 and above, the focus shifts to transitional pathway skills which are expressed by the learner in their Individual Learning Plan. An example of the learning experiences at Holy Spirit College include literacy, numeracy, wellbeing, study of society and environment, vocational training, information technology, music, technology, outdoor education, 'On Country' days, science, a variety of sports, manual arts and creative arts.



Relationships & Connection

The Holy Spirit College educational approach is one based in connection and relationship. There are many different ways we go about achieving this, these include:

Young people check-ins – This occurs several times a day, where staff take time to sit with young people in smaller groups to check-in with how they are feeling. It also provides a great opportunity to develop an awareness and language around emotions along with strategies they can use to resolve issues or conflicts.

Working Agreements – These are utilised for each activity at the college and provide the young people with a voice as to what the principles of Right Relationship, Respect, Responsibility and Participation will look like during the activity. This allows everyone to set the expectations for the group and encourages empowerment of the individual.

Circle-up – This is where the whole site comes together in a circle to communicate, celebrate success or conduct a whole site check-in.

Operation by Principles (OBP) conversation – These occur multiple times a day where staff use the language of the principles to affirm behaviour that is in line with the principles or encourage the young person to consider alternative behaviours when they are not in line with the principles. These are calm conversations that empower the young people.





Collaborative Problem-Solving (CPS) conversations – These occur when a young person has repeatedly exhibited behaviours that are not in line with the principles or has engaged in a major incident. This may be led by a Mentor or Head of Campus. This meeting encourages the young person to come up with alternatives to their behaviour and explores their desire to recommit to the Agreed Practices of the college.



Parent and guardian communication – The majority of communication coming out of the college will be positive. We love celebrating the daily successes of our mentors and young people. These will be sent out via our **Holy Spirit College Facebook and Instagram** posts. **Letters and emails** from various members of the College teaching, boarding and administration staff will be used to communicate other matters directly with parents and guardians.



Semester Reports - Each student will receive a College Semester Report at the end of each semester. These are strength-based reports, highlighting the growth and successes of each young person.

Boarding Mentor – This is for Cooktown boarding students only. Each boarding student is appointed a mentor who is a member of the boarding staff. The role of a mentor is to be an informal link between the student, family and day school. This mentor will call parents and guardians throughout the year to build a long-term relationship, to better support the needs of the boarders. Where possible, these mentors may also fly into communities and escort students to and from the College.

Parent/Guardian contact - All parents and guardians are welcome to contact the college at any time, and this applies especially to parents of boarders. The best way to contact staff is by calling the front administration worker at each site who will pass on your message or connect you to the appropriate staff member straight away.



Boarding

The Holy Spirit College boarding houses are considered more than just a place to live, as we believe we are a unique community of staff and learners from across Cape York and the world. **We provide x2 boarding houses in Cooktown catering for x16 female and x16 male boarders.** Each house is co-located on the landscaped grounds in the bush setting of 1 Burkitt St, Cooktown, within the Holy Spirit College - Cooktown day school. The facilities are modern, twin share rooms, with access to shared toilets, showers, a common room with Netflix and plenty of outdoor space for basketball, engaging in craft activities or relaxing on the soft grass.

The Holy Spirit College boarding houses are fee free for young people who are Abstudy eligible.

All meals are provided for boarding students. These are prepared by our amazing friendly catering staff who ensure that each young person is provided with high quality nutritious meals.

Outside of school hours, our boarders have access to a wide variety of extracurricular activities including fishing, beach walks, swimming at the pool, Cooktown library borrowing, visiting the PCYC for sport and visiting the shops once per week. Our boarders are also taught organisational and time management skills, as well as practical domestic skills, such as cleaning their own room and washing their clothes.

Our boarding staff are experienced professionals from diverse backgrounds including First Nations staff that live within the Cooktown community. They undertake regular training to ensure that the young people are looked after in a facility that is safe and run to a high standard.



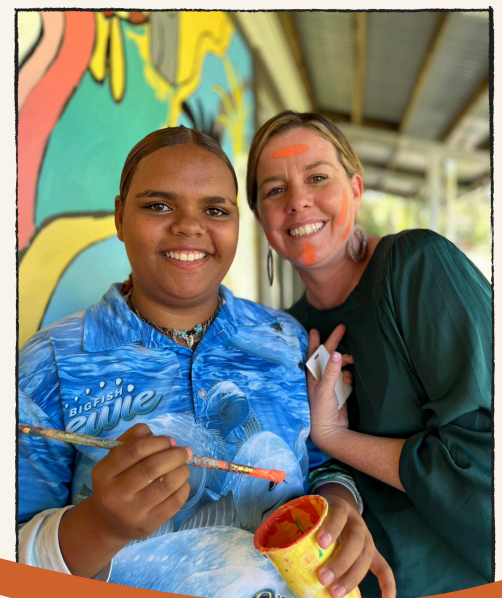
Living together - all boarders are expected to behave within the principles set out by the college. These include Right Relationship, Respect, Responsibility and Participation. As a boarding facility, the zone of tolerance for behaviours that do not align with these principles is smaller as the responsibility for learner safety and wellbeing is greater when students live at the college. The use of illicit substances, engagement in sexualised behaviours and wilful damage of property may result in exclusion from boarding.

Boarders' Travel - All Abstudy travel is arranged by the College. Abstudy agrees to fly boarders to and from their registered address, that is, the address that is given to Centrelink. Please ensure your details with Centrelink are up to date.

Medical and Dental – Holy Spirit College has processes in place to ensure that all students have access to appropriate First Aid and management of medication. We also have a productive relationship with the local Cooktown health services. An unwell student will receive First Aid and be assessed to determine if an appointment to see a doctor or dentist is required.

There will be times when a student is required to attend a medical appointment. The College will happily arrange transport to medical appointments.

Mobile phones - The College prefers students to have access to a mobile phone while at the College in order to maintain contact with their parents. However, the use of phones needs to be reasonable. All students hand their mobile phones in to the boarding staff before bed at night and collect them after day school the following day. If a boarder is abusing the right of use expectation, the device may be confiscated.



Key Dates 2025

Term 1

Monday 13 January	Office opens
Monday 27 January	Australia Day Public Holiday
Tuesday 28 January	Whole college student free day
Wednesday 29 January	Whole college student free day
Friday 31 January	Cooktown boarders travel day
Thursday 30 January	First day of term
Wednesday 02 April	Cooktown boarders travel day
Friday 04 April	Last day of term
	Cooktown student free day
Saturday 05 April - Sunday 20 April	School Holidays (2 weeks)

Term 2

Monday 21 April	Easter Monday Public Holiday
Tuesday 22 April	First day of term
	Cooktown boarders travel day
Friday 25 April	ANZAC Day Public Holiday
Monday 05 May	Labour Day Public Holiday
Wednesday 25 June	Cooktown boarders travel day
Friday 27 June	Last day of term
Saturday 28 June - Sunday 13 July	School Holidays (2 weeks)



Key Dates 2025

Term 3

Monday 14 July	First day of term
	Cooktown boarders travel day
Friday 18 July	Cairns Show Day Public Holiday
Wednesday 17 September	Cooktown boarders travel day
Friday 19 September	Last day of term
Saturday 20 September - Sunday 05 October	School Holidays (2 weeks)

Term 4

Monday 06 October	King's Birthday Public Holiday
Tuesday 07 October	First day of term
	Cooktown boarders travel day
Wednesday 26 November	Cooktown end of year celebration
Thursday 27 November	Edmonton & Manoora end of year celebration
	Cooktown boarders travel day
Friday 28 November	Student free day
Friday 12 December	Offices closes





Thank You!

"It's a whole lot more productive to be in problem-solving mode than it is to be in behaviour modification mode."

Dr. Ross Greene

1800 317 545

www.holyspiritcollege.qld.edu.au

office.holyspirit@cns.catholic.edu.au

@hscCooktownandCairns

Holy Spirit College Cooktown and Cairns

