



POLICY:	EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURE
COMMITTEE:	PREMISES, HEALTH & SAFETY
MEMBER OF STAFF RESPONSIBLE:	CELINE HAWKINS
GOVERNOR RESPONSIBLE:	SCOTT MOFFAT
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HIGH WYCOMBE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

Policy for Emergency School Closure

Introduction

It may be necessary to the close school at short notice for a variety of reasons including:-

- Severe Weather including snow, flooding or storms
- Disruption to Transport, for example through petrol or diesel shortages
- Strike Action resulting in insufficient members of the staff to run the school
- School Building Problems i.e. loss of power supply or water, heating failure or fire damage

The School will, however, endeavour to remain open where possible. School contingency plans will be passed on to staff, parents and pupils. It may be necessary for partial closure or for late opening and early closure of the school. Parents will be updated via text and the school and county websites.

On school days where snow is lying on the ground, parents should assume that the Hot School Meal service will not be available, and send their children in with a suitable packed lunch; parents should also assume that all After School Clubs will be cancelled, unless informed otherwise.

Closure due to severe weather

The decision to close the school is the responsibility of the Headteacher or in their absence the Assistant Headteachers and is confirmed with the Chair of Governors or if they are unavailable, the Vice Chair. The decision should be made on the basis of information received from the media about weather, supplemented by on the spot observations, either personally or from staff members better placed to make such observations and through appropriate external agencies such as the Met Office.

The health and safety of staff, pupils and parents is paramount in these circumstances. Factors involved in reaching the decision to close the school are likely to be:-

- Safe access to the school, i.e. road conditions (snow, ice, flooding etc).
- Safe access around the school site i.e. clear pathways, emergency exits
- Availability of Teachers at school, the Governing Body have decided that a minimum of 5 teachers need to be present for the school to open.
- The ability to meet the needs of all of the pupils
- Breakdown of school essential services (heating, electrical services, water, storm damage etc).

The Headteacher will advise staff through the telephone chain (all staff should have a personal copy) and advise parents via the 'teacher to parents' text service. Parents should also check the school and county websites, and monitor them regularly for updates about closures or amended opening hours.

Unexpected Incidents

In the event of an unexpected overnight incident, the open/close decision will be made as early as possible, with regard to staff availability, safe access to and from and around the school. Parents should assume that the school is open, unless otherwise notified by text or via the County website. Parents should present their children at the regular time and will remain responsible for their children up until they are accepted into school by a member of the teaching staff.

All parents should ensure that they have submitted their up to date contact details to the school

The whole school community should regularly be made aware of this procedure as incidents can occur with little or no warning.

During School Day Closure Guidance

On occasions it may be necessary for school to close during the school day i.e. if the weather is deteriorating and there is doubt as to whether children can be collected safely later in the day. In such cases the school will endeavour to telephone or text parents to enable arrangements to be made. It may be necessary to obtain verbal permission from parents for their child to be collected by another named parent.

Staff Attendance

Although it is recognised that severe weather conditions make it difficult for staff to get to and from work, unless advised to the contrary by the Headteacher, then the expectation is that staff will present themselves for work as long as it is safe to do so.

Clearance of Snow

Within the school site, the school is responsible for snow clearance. See 'Policy for Clearing Snow and Ice'.

The clearance of public roads is the responsibility of the Highways Department.

In the Event of School Being Closed

If school is closed it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that the following events happen :-

- The decision is ratified with the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors.
- Parents are informed via 'Teacher to Parent' text service.
- Information is published on the school and county websites.
- If practical, the school office answer phone message will be amended to a short closure message and closure signs will be displayed outside the school.
- Teachers will place 'closure work' on the school website, where appropriate

These tasks do not all have to be completed by the Headteacher, although they have the overall responsibility for ensuring each has been carried out.