



## Emergency School Closure Policy

### **Rationale**

It may be necessary to temporarily close the school for a variety of reasons including:

- Severe weather including snow, flooding or storms
- Disruption to transport, for example through petrol or diesel shortages
- Accommodation problems, for example loss of power supply, heating failures or fire damage
- A major incident in the locality of the school where emergency services or the local authority have advised the school to be closed

### **Closure due to severe weather**

The decision to close a school will normally rest with the Headteacher (or in her absence the Deputy Headteacher). The decision should be made where possible before 7.30am and on the basis of information received from the media about weather, supplemented by on the spot observation, either personally or from staff members better placed to make such observations and through appropriate external agencies such as the Met Office. Factors involved in reaching the decision to close the school are likely to be:

- Access to the school, i.e. road conditions (obstructions, snow, ice, flooding etc).
- Breakdown of school essential services (heating, electrical services, water, storm damage etc).

The Headteacher will advise staff and parents of any school closure through the text service. Closures will be considered on a daily basis and will be advertised on our school website and communicated via our texting service.

The whole school community, including the Nursery, should be made regularly 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 safely returned home later in the day. In such cases the school will ensure that children are collected from school.

In these cases, the school will send out a text message informing parents of the closure. Parents who are subsequently unable to collect their child and need to make alternative arrangements should telephone the school. 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. Travel to work/school is regarded by both the Police and the Council's Highways Management as an essential journey, and every effort should be made to get to work unless it is known that your school has closed or you consider it unsafe to do so.

### **Clearance of snow**

Within the school site, the school is responsible for snow clearance and the clearing of approach paths is the specific task of the caretaker. The clearance of public roads is the responsibility of the Highways Department.

### **In the event of school being closed**

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

- The text service to staff and parents is implemented.
- The website is updated.
- Where possible, notices are placed on the school noticeboard advising visitors, parents and pupils that school is closed
- School is appropriately staffed wherever possible to deal with any pupils who arrive at school unescorted until parents or emergency contacts can collect the pupils.

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.