

## Emergency School Closure Procedure

### Taking the Decision to Close the School

The Head of School, Site Manager and Executive/Federation Headteacher in consultation with other members of staff will take the decision to make an emergency closure when the state of the weather or any other exceptional circumstance make it absolutely unavoidable.

This decision will be supported by the latest and most accurate information available. The presumption should be in favour of keeping the school open unless, in the Head of School's view, to do so would put the health, safety or welfare of pupils and/or staff at risk. In reaching this decision, the Head of School, Site Manager and Executive/Federation Headteacher will take full account of local circumstances and, in particular, the following considerations:

- (a) Both short and longer term extreme weather information: Attention should be paid to ascertaining what would be a safe and appropriate time to send pupils and staff home.
- (b) Advice regarding local transport and the safety of local roads: Whether buses and trains are running, and whether it is safe to drive.
- (c) Arrangements for pupil safety: The absolute priority is to ensure that provision is made for each and every child. Where children cannot be collected immediately, they will be kept at school and supervised until collection can take place.
- (d) Whether the school is accessible, and has working heating/electrics/water. The closure or opening of other schools in the proximity will not be the key factor in such taking decisions.

It is the responsibility of all staff to make every effort to attend for duty. School leadership should be mindful of the number of local staff and use this knowledge to put a plan into place, should a number of other staff be delayed. If travelling to school is absolutely not viable, then staff should plan to travel to their nearest Trust school if this has an easier route by public transport or road.

If the decision is taken to close the school, staff will be expected to work from home, using the time to plan resources etc. Teachers will use this time in place of their PPA for the week.

### Advice to Parents/Carers

It is recognised that parents have a key role to play in the event of severe weather. All pupils are expected to attend school every day that the school is open, irrespective of the weather. DfE guidance gives some flexibility regarding pupils that are unable to attend for exceptional weather where they travel a greater distance. This would be dealt with on an individual basis.

It is essential that, when there is potential for school closures due to severe weather conditions, schools are in a position to communicate quickly and clearly with parents and carers. Any decision to close should be taken as early in the day as possible, or if feasible notification should be provided the evening before. The Emergency School Closure procedure should be used to communicate the decision. This will involve putting an announcement on the website, leaving an appropriate

message on the school answerphone (instructions to be left for the Site Manager if this can't be done remotely), and emailing/texting parents and staff by 7.30am.

The emergency contacts list (appendix 1) must be completed and distributed to all staff named. This list must be kept at home and school so that emergency information is available at all times.

### **Closure during the school day**

Safe and speedy dismissal of pupils in the event of an emergency closure depends on the school and parents working in partnership. Parents are required to give the school an emergency contact.

It may be that a parent who collects his/her children offers to give shelter to other children. The agreement of the parents of these children must be sought before releasing pupils in this way. The provision of adequate supervision by members of teaching staff should be made for those pupils who cannot go home immediately and have therefore to remain at school.

