



## **Closure of the School due to Adverse Weather Conditions**

It is important that we anticipate the possibility that the school may need to close due to adverse weather conditions and this is the aspect of emergency closure dealt with in this policy. Other possible reasons for closure could include loss of water, power and heating to part or all of the school and this policy would also apply in these circumstances.

### **Points to consider**

- Staff and pupils often travel considerable distances by road and rail
- Conditions in Andover may be very different from those in the home area
- Public and pupil transport may be disrupted or cancelled
- Pickups by school minibus may not be possible
- Consideration must also be made of the travel conditions between home and school
- Ultimately it is for parents to decide if children should leave home for school in bad weather even if the school is to open
- If parents are not going to be home during the day your children should know where they should go if the school has to close
- The school will remain a place of safety for those children who arrive at school and have no way of going home or to another family home.

Most years we escape bad weather with little disruption but the school needs to be prepared for the eventuality.

### **The main criteria for closing the School are:**

- The Health and Safety risk of expecting staff and pupils to travel to School or stay at School.
- The inability of the School to function due to significant travel disruption.
- The number of staff who live within 1 hour of walking distance of school. This would be a walk to work on untreated pavements.
- Pupil/staff ratios are critical in some parts of the school, particularly Early Years.

### **Closing the School before the start of the school day**

It is important to make an early announcement in order to minimise any potential travel risk. The school must be mindful that many staff travel a considerable distance to school each day and that many pupils live in small towns and villages, where the roads can be very dangerous due to low levels

of gritting and snow clearance. The Headmaster and/or Deputy Head teacher will make an early assessment of any poor weather situation. This will be done in conjunction with, and on advice from, the caretaker, who lives on the school site. He in turn will inspect the site and consult with the site team. Discussions may also take place with senior staff who live away from the Andover area and reference will be made to local weather websites as appropriate.

The Chair of Governors should be informed of the decision to close as soon as possible.

**Contact with staff and parents will be made in the following ways:**

- Via text to staff
- Via the school website
- Via the school text service to parents
- Also inform the school bus contractor and school bus drivers
- By leaving a message on our answer machine facility in the office advising parents that the school is closed and referring them to the school website for further details
- By attempting to man the 3 phones in the office area until at least 0930 with very local staff

Should closure be deemed necessary for more than one day a decision should be notified by the end of the normal school day via the same channels noted above. This should enable parents to make necessary arrangements for childcare.

**Reopening**

The same channels of communication will be used to inform staff and parents when the school will be re-opening.

For this system to operate school will require up-to-date information about telephone numbers and email addresses for both staff and parents.

**Procedures for staff**

If the school is closed due to adverse weather/travel condition, staff are **not** required to attend but may do so once they have checked that the buildings are open and usable and that they are certain that it is safe to travel to school from their location. Teaching staff should ensure that appropriate school work has been set remotely (e.g. on Teams or Tapestry), taking into account the resources the pupils and parents are likely to have available to them at home. There is no requirement for lessons to be taught 'live'; however, teachers should be available for a reasonable length of time during the school day to provide feedback and guidance through the chat function.

**Closing the school during the school day**

Closing the school once it is in session is more problematic than at any other time. The issue here is getting the pupils home and ensuring a parent/carer is there to receive them.

It will be a judgement call in assessing the two areas of risk – keeping pupils in school and being certain pupils will be able to get home safely –especially if travelling by bus or train – or sending them home to a potentially empty residence. If the decision is the latter, we will provide every opportunity for pupils to make contact with their parents/carers so that they are informed of our decision. In the case of younger children, we will make direct contact with their parents/carers. We will need to keep in constant contact with local weather reports and transport providers so that an accurate and early assessment can be made. Contact with parents will be made via the systems noted above.

### **The Boarding House**

The Boarding House will remain open during adverse weather conditions to cater for the needs of boarders and any pupils who are stranded. If the school closes, that decision will be communicated as early as possible with the Boarding House Staff.

WHATEVER THE CIRCUMSTANCES ALL CHILDREN WILL BE CARED FOR IN SCHOOL OR AT THE BOARDING HOUSE UNTIL THEY CAN TRAVEL HOME SAFELY OR CAN BE COLLECTED BY A PARENT OR CARER.

**Please note: fee refunds are not available for closure due to adverse weather conditions.**