



Procedures for Snow, Ice and Extreme Weather - Potential School Closure

The following procedures have been set out so that, as a staff, we are able to deal with any such eventualities linked to snow and ice in an effective way. The procedures set out may also be used if other extreme weather has been forecast (e.g. severe storm/winds).

Ideally, we would like to do our best to ensure there is no impact upon school life, however, the safety of our staff and children is our main priority and, under some circumstances, the school may have to close to ensure the safety of the school community.

It is the Headteacher who must make the decision as to whether or not the school will remain open or closed under such conditions. The following sets out the procedures for how these decisions will be made and what will happen as a consequence of this.

Based on previous historical events linked to snow and ice, as a staff it has been agreed that, if there is significant snowfall to the point where staff feel it would put them in danger to travel to school due to the weather, action will be taken to close or partially close the school. This will only be done under extreme circumstances.

If there has been severe snowfall and parents deem the conditions to be too unsafe to travel to get their child to school, they should inform the school and keep school updated as to when their child will return to school.

REASONS FOR SCHOOL CLOSURE

Snowfall – Outside of school hours

If there has been heavy snowfall outside of school hours, the Headteacher will make a decision as to whether or not they feel conditions are unsafe for staff and children to travel to school. As a member of staff lives within walking distance of the school, the Headteacher will ask this member of staff to visually check conditions on site and report back. This information will then inform the Headteacher's decision, which will be made at approximately 7.30am and then filtered out to staff and parents via the procedures detailed in this document.

If snowy conditions are more localised and a member of staff feels they are unable to get to work safely due to the snow, they should contact the Headteacher as soon as possible so that adequate cover can be organised. In such cases, the member of staff should keep the Headteacher informed of their situation and return to work once it is safe to do so.

Snowfall - During school hours

If it begins to snow during the school day, the Headteacher will monitor the weather conditions and, if the snow remains heavy for a prolonged period, a decision may be taken to close the school to ensure staff and children are able to get home safely before conditions worsen. In the event of such a decision being made, action must be taken immediately to inform parents so that children are collected as soon as possible. This will be done via the school text messaging system, School Ping, adding a message to the main page of the school's website and finally via telephone, where necessary. In the event of very severe weather, it may be necessary for some staff members to leave school before all of the children have been collected due to their individual travel needs. In such instances, members of staff who are able to stay will remain in school until all children have been collected before heading home themselves.

Icy Conditions

In certain icy conditions it may become unsafe for staff to travel to work. This may be across the wider Warrington area or restricted to other areas. In the event of icy conditions which prevent all staff from getting safely to school, the Headteacher will make a decision, as to whether school will close, or open later. In the event of this happening staff/parents will be informed via the procedures below.

If icy conditions are more localised and a member of staff feels they are unable to get to work safely due to the icy conditions, they should contact the Headteacher as soon as possible so that adequate cover can be organised. In such cases, the member of staff should keep the Headteacher informed of their situation and return to work once it is safe to do so.

PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL CLOSURE

Procedure for school closure – Informing Staff

Once the Headteacher has made the decision to close the school due to severe weather, they will use the agreed waterfall system to filter down the information to staff (see attached). It is the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure all staff are kept updated. All staff have been given a copy of the waterfall contact sheet and designated staff have agreed to inform staff members of any closures and keep them updated of the situation. Staff are asked to liaise with their designated point of contact on the waterfall system. During a period of school closure, particularly where this may be prolonged, staff should ensure they check their emails for regularly as updates and work activities will be given via email communication.

Procedure for school Closure – Parents/Children

Outside of school hours

If the Headteacher makes the decision to close the school, every effort will be made to ensure parents are informed as soon as possible. In such instances, parents will be informed via the following methods;

- A text message will be sent by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Member of the Admin Team using the school text message system (Teachers2Parents) and School PING to inform parents of the closure
- The front page of the school website will be updated by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Member of the Admin Team to inform parents of the closure.
- The Headteacher will inform Wire FM (local radio station) of the closure - **0844 736 0083**.
- In addition to this, the Headteacher will inform the local authority who would normally update any school closure information on their own website.
- The Headteacher will also inform the Chair of Governors.

During school hours

If the decision is taken to close the school during school hours, as well as the methods noted above, the school may also contact parents via telephone to ensure all parents are informed and that all children are able to be collected safely. Once this decision has been made, school ask that parents make every effort to collect their children as soon as possible to ensure that children and staff can get home safely in case weather conditions worsen.

Partial Closure

There may be a need for partial school closure if some members of staff are unable to safely get to work. Under these circumstances, the Headteacher will make the decision as to how staff and children will be organised across

the school. All class teachers have set aside appropriate work packs which can be used in such an eventuality so that suitable provision can be made for their class.

REOPENING THE SCHOOL AFTER CLOSURE

Staff

If the school has been closed due to severe weather, staff will be updated regularly via the waterfall system and, once conditions are deemed safe, school will reopen as normal. Any member of staff who feels they are still unable to get to work safely should inform the Headteacher as soon as possible.

Parents/Children

If the school has been closed due to severe weather, parents will be updated via the Website, Text Message System, School PING, local radio and Local Authority website, as to when school will be reopening.

CONTINUED PROVISION IF THE SCHOOL IS CLOSED FOR A PROLONGED PERIOD OF TIME

Children

In the event of the school closing for a prolonged period of time, provision will be made via School PING/School Website to ensure children have access to suitable activities they can complete whilst the school is closed. This is in addition to any reading, spelling and homework activities that may already have been set. A list of suggested activities and links to suitable websites to support children's learning will be made available on the school website under the tab 'School Closure – Snow'; this tab will be made active in the event of a school closure due to snow.

Staff

In the event of school closing for any period of time, staff should ensure they continue to check their emails as work will be set so that staff are able to work from home during this time.

Written by: L. Duckett (April 2011)

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