

Emergency School Closure Policy – October 2019

GREENHAUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Emergency School Closure Policy

Introduction

It may be necessary to close school for a variety of reasons such as:-

- severe weather including snow, flooding or storms
- accommodation problems, for example loss of power supply, heating failures, fire or flood damage

School should, however, endeavour to remain open where possible. School contingency plans should be passed on to staff, parents and pupils.

1. Closure due to severe weather.

The decision to close a school will normally rest with the Headteacher or in his/her absence the Senior Teacher. The decision should be made where possible before 7.00 am and on the basis of information received from the media about weather, supplemented, if possible, by an on the spot observation either personally or from a member of staff, governor or parents better placed to make such observations, and also through appropriate external agencies such as the Met Office.

If the decision is reached that the school will remain open we ask parents to make every effort to get their children to school. As some children live on remote farms or long distances from school we appreciate that attendance may not be possible. In this instance we ask parents to inform school of the absence in the usual way before the morning session begins.

Factors involved in reaching the decision to close the school will include:

- Ability of sufficient staff to be on site
- 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, governors and parents through the Emergency Closure information pyramid that is circulated to all staff and parents in the Autumn term of each academic year, and also advise parents and pupils to check the school website, listen to local radio stations or visit Northumberland County Council's website where details of school closures will be published.

The Emergency Closure information pyramid will be activated each day that the school remains closed.

Parents are aware that the school web-site has age related educational activities for their children to do, details of projects or homework will also be made available on the web-site should the school remain closed for longer than a week.

2. 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 returned home later in the day. In such cases the school needs to ensure that children are collected from school. The school emergency closure information pyramid may also apply.

3. 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.

4. Clearance of Snow

Within the school site, the school is responsible for snow clearance. Clearing and gritting of approach paths should, if possible, be complete before any children arrive.

The clearance of public roads is the responsibility of Northumberland County Council. Road conditions will be taken into consideration when a decision about school closure is made.

If there is any question of children's safety being at risk, for instance if the playground area is unsafe, school has a responsibility in inclement weather to keep the children indoors.

5. 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 Chair of Governors is informed
- The school website is updated
- The Emergency Closure information pyramid is activated – including school transport companies
- The information is passed to relevant media agencies as soon as possible
- Inform Northumberland County Council of the closure.

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

This policy will be reviewed every two years.