

Temporary, Unavoidable School Closure Guidance

Introduction

There are occasions when it is necessary for a school to close temporarily in the interests of health and safety to pupils and staff. In most cases this will be as a result of problems relating to the school building or heating, or because of severe weather conditions. It is important to keep the necessity to close to a minimum in order to reduce the number of pupil days lost to education.

Responsibility for School Closure

The responsibility to close a school lies with the Head teacher (or most senior teacher if he is not available) in consultation, where possible, with the chair of governors.

Procedure to be followed

1. The school is to operate normally whenever possible and only resort to closure or early closure in exceptional circumstances when conditions are such that the health and safety of pupils and staff are at risk. Closure for any other purpose is not acceptable
2. A decision to close the school in the case of severe weather, should be made following consideration of reports/ warnings from the appropriate authorities (eg travel warnings from police or met office warnings)
3. In the case of a building matter or heating problem which has health and safety implications, consideration should be given to whether a partial closure rather than a full closure could be achieved in order to minimise disruption to education. Further contingencies may be required if the closure is to be lengthy (eg off-site education)
4. In considering closure for health and safety reasons, the head teacher should, where possible, seek guidance from the appropriate officer in the local authority- see numbers above. The role of the local authority is to give clear guidance; however the final decision rests with the head teacher and/ or the governing body.
5. Once a decision to close is made the head teacher should advise the local authority and keep in touch with the local authority until the school is fully re-opened.
6. In the event of extended closure the school will, where practical, provide work for pupils to do at home.
7. The head teacher will ensure that parents know how any decision relating to the closure will be notified to them.
8. Once a decision to not open or to close early is made every effort will be made to inform parents/ carers and other agencies of the decision at the earliest opportunity using teachers2parents text service. The local authority will be contacted to arrange contact with local radio stations.
9. Notice that the school is re-opening will be by teachers2parents. The local authority will also have this information to advise anyone who calls them.
10. Staff attendance
 - a. Staff are expected to attend for work in the normal way during severe weather conditions. If as a result of the conditions staff members are unable to get to work

the head teacher must be informed and the staff member is then expected to work from home.

- b. Staff who arrive late as a result of adverse conditions will not lose pay or be required to make up lost time
- c. Disabled employees with mobility problems should not attempt to come to work and will not lose pay or be required to make up lost time.
- d. Where school is closed to both pupils and staff, time off will be with pay
- e. In the case of severe weather, where possible, the most senior teacher available should assume responsibility for supervision. If a significant number of teaching staff fail to arrive in school on time. Teachers on site should inform parents and children who do arrive at the school of the situation and supervise any pupils who arrive unaccompanied until such time as they can be collected or returned home safely to a responsible adult.
- f. Staff must attend in other closure circumstances and, where necessary, work off site. If staff are released by the head teacher to go home they are expected to work from home.