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Lanesend Primary School

School Closure Policy School Environmental Policy

Signed: Date:
(Headteacher)

Signed: Date:
(Chair of Governors)

Review Date: September 2019 (Yearly)
Reviewed By: Headteacher, Full Governing Body and Site Manager

Lanesend Primary

School Closure Policy

Introduction

School closure could result from loss of power, heating, water, other essential services or extreme weather conditions. There is a duty on Governors and the Headteacher to provide an educational service for all children. Decisions concerned with the school closing due to severe weather conditions or the loss of essential services is made by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors.

Closure Assessment Criteria

Head Teachers, in consultation where practicable with their Chair of Governors, should assess the situation. In their assessment they should take account of the:

- a) safety and accessibility of the site and surrounding area
- b) availability of heat, light, power and water
- c) availability of staff
- d) availability of meals

Extreme Weather Conditions

In the event of extreme weather conditions the school will make the decision either to remain open or close and will inform the Local Authority as soon as possible and to adhere to the Isle of Wight School Closure Policy. The Isle of Wight Local Authority will update school closures on the Isle of Wight Council website, Facebook and Twitter page.

Events Covered by Extreme Weather Conditions

Storms

Winds forecast in excess of 70mph or storm force 8 could represent a potential danger to some buildings, trees, other structures and people.

- The Meteorological Office provides a regional weather forecast
Email: www.metoffice.com Phone No: 0845 300 0300

Safety Issues

- Safety of children, staff and visitors take priority. Lessons may need to be disrupted and school movement kept to a minimum
- Consideration needs to be given to movement outside of school buildings due to the risk of falling tiles, masonry, fencing etc.
- It is likely to be necessary to cancel outside play and other activities. Consideration must be given over the likelihood of children being blown off their feet.

- Children should not be allowed to cycle home – families would need to be advised over this possibility.

Floods

Sudden flooding may result in local problems within school, making some rooms uninhabitable. However, of greater significance in terms of health and safety is the potential impact on transport arrangements and children and staff getting home.

Cold Weather

This may be a problem due to the low temperature in some areas of the building or may be complicated by heavy snowfalls making access difficult or dangerous.

- The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 set a standard of 18C in teaching areas and 15C in the hall, corridors, cloakrooms and toilets where the external air temperature is 1C or above.
- Failure to reach these temperatures is a maintenance issue, but if there is a breakdown which puts the heating system out of action for any length of time consideration needs to be given as to whether the building can be heated with emergency heating and continue to be occupied.
- Any plans to provide emergency heating, including how these can be obtained and where they can be safely deployed, should be outlined as part of the emergency plan.
- Adverse weather conditions may result in difficulties for some staff in reaching school resulting in child supervision issues. In such circumstances the overriding priority will be the safety of children.

Disruption to the School's Water Supply

Provided sufficient notice that the water supply is to be disconnected is received, it will be possible to make a decision on whether or not to keep the school open. This decision will be based upon

- the duration of the disruption;
- the capacity of the water storage tanks which will generally enable toilets to be flushed.

Emergency Closure Prior to the Start of the School Day

It is the policy of the school to make every effort to remain open whenever possible; however in certain situations it may be appropriate in advance to decide that the school should not open. This will generally be as a result of a difficulty where there is advance notice. This could include a planned disruption to water or energy supplies. In such cases, families will be given as much notice as possible and informed of either a confirmed date when the school will re-open or advised on how this will be communicated. This will be through the school website and text messaging system. In other situations, weather conditions may worsen dramatically overnight. In such circumstances it will be important that decisions over closure reflect:

- intelligence over the weather conditions in the school's catchment area;
- the likelihood of a sufficient number of staff being able to reach school to make it safe to operate;
- the timing of any decision, taking account of the travel arrangements of the school.

When the Headteacher decides, in consultation with the Chair of Governors as appropriate, that severe weather warrants school closure the Headteacher will :

- a) Inform staff, using text messaging
- b) Inform families by text message and by following the Isle of Wight School Closure Policy:
- c) Inform any transport contractor who might otherwise collect children and bring them to school:
- d) Ensure that local staff are able to be at the school to inform any families or children who may not have received the closure message.
- e) Inform Caterlink Catering

The school will make all practicable efforts to keep families informed as to the situation with the school during adverse weather conditions. However, families are expected to check the website and/or make themselves aware of the radio broadcasts when it is clear that a closure is a possibility.

The school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal; families should endeavor to contact the school to let them know they are on their way if likely to be delayed. It is important that if families feel it is unsafe to travel they should not attempt the journey, but must inform the school of their decision.

The school recognises there will be isolated instances where families are cut off, even where the clear majority of children can get into school. In such instances families should inform the school of the circumstances of this exceptional situation. Families acting on the assumption that the school would be closed without gaining confirmation, risks their child being registered as an un-authorised absence. Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorised.

Health and Safety

In the event of snow some pathways will be cleared and salted. Staff, families, children and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, remain slippery. Children will also be reminded of this in assembly.

In icy conditions staff will clear/ salt affected areas of the school site.

Essential pathways will be maintained as clear as possible throughout the day.

During adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out of bounds to children during the school day if the Head Teacher decides it necessary.

In the Head Teacher's absence the member of the Progression Team on site will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to these procedures.

Sending Children Home Early

In some exceptional circumstances, a review of the local situation may lead a Headteacher to decide that the school, or part of the school, should be closed early. Such a decision should not be taken without first consulting appropriate persons, including the Chair of Governors. Such temporary and emergency closures do not count against the requirement for a school in the maintained sector to meet the minimum number of sessions each year. A number of factors will be considered in making this decision including:

- It may often be safer to keep children in certain parts of the school rather than send them home early.
- Contacting a large number of families, especially during the day.
- Changing transport and school meal arrangements at short notice (free school meal child)
- Any decision over sending children home early must also include an informed assessment over their safety.
- In the event of the school having to close during the day families will be contacted by text and also by email to collect their child/ren.
- At least two members of staff will remain onsite until all children have left the premises. Staff who live furthest away will be allowed to leave first.

Communication

- Staff, children and families will be made aware in advance of contingency arrangements.
- Emergency arrangements will be posted on the school website.
- Text messaging is used to inform members of staff if school is closed before the start of the day.
- Any alteration to travel arrangements of children will be informed to families.

School closure for any other reason

In the event of a school closure for any reason the Department for Education will be informed. The number of school sessions required is laid down in Regulation 3 of the Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999 and

requires that every school in England is divided into two sessions. These must be separated by a break in the middle of the day unless exceptional circumstances make this undesirable. With the exception of nursery schools, each school must meet for 380 sessions a year. The DfE guidance on the teaching hours for schools applies on all days when schools are open. Families can reasonably expect schools to maintain their normal hours on each of the 190 days that schools are open, unless adverse weather or other emergency makes this impracticable for one or more sessions. Under any such exceptional circumstances the Headteacher of a maintained school will need to liaise with the Education Adviser for the school.