

Department of Education

Director: Mhairi Shaw

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Our Ref: DS/LS

Your Ref:

Date: September 2014

Dear Parent/Carer

Emergency School Closure Procedures

You may remember that in previous years the weather was so severe that we had to carry out an emergency closure of the school. Our school, like other schools in East Renfrewshire then remained closed for almost one week.

As we move towards Winter it seems appropriate to write to you to describe our procedures should we require to close the school in an emergency situation caused by severe weather. The Parent Council have been consulted on the procedures described below and are in agreement that these are the best arrangements for closing the school in adverse weather conditions.

I would ask you at this time to discuss the prospect of an emergency closure with your child/children and ensure they are aware of the best arrangements for them in these circumstances.

In the event of severe weather conditions I am guided by the advice in the Education Department's Revised Standard Circular 10b. Following an assessment of the situation, in consultation with relevant staff in the Education Department, a decision will be made on whether or not to close the school. If an emergency closure of the school is to be carried out the following procedures will take place.

- We will contact the transport providers to ensure that the school buses and taxis will be available. If they are not then more pupils will require to wait in school to be collected by parents.
- We will put information on the school's website about the arrangements for the closure. It is vitally important that in the event of any severe weather parents and carers make every effort to regularly monitor the school's website. The website will be regularly updated with any important information.
- We will also text and email parents and carers with information on the school closure and refer you to the school's website.
- We will alert pupils to the impending emergency closure and ask them, if possible, to text or phone you on their mobile phone to confirm the best arrangements for them.
- We will then gather together our most vulnerable pupils and contact their parents to put in place arrangements for their transport home.

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- At this point we will start to evacuate the school. We will make every effort to group older pupils with younger pupils and siblings and close family members together before they leave school. We will then put pupils on buses (if they are available) and send these pupils home. Simultaneously we will dismiss pupils who live nearby the school and can safely walk home.
- It is at this time that we need to trust the information given to us by pupils. In these circumstances there is not always time to check with parents/carers that this information is correct. Please reinforce this message with your child/children and emphasise to them that if they cannot travel home safely that they should share this with school staff and remain in the school.
- When pupils who can travel home safely on buses (if they are available) or on foot have left the school all remaining pupils will be gathered together. We will then start to contact parents and carers to make arrangements for these pupils to be collected from the school as soon as possible. Parents who arrive at the school in these circumstances will be greeted at the main entrance by a member of staff who will then arrange for their child to join them to be taken home.
- In very extreme circumstances some pupils may not be able to get home and may have to remain in school beyond the school day. This situation will be discussed with parents and with the support of senior school staff and the Education Department pupils will be accommodated in school until arrangements are put in place for their safe transport home.

When the school has been safely closed I will liaise with the Education Department on subsequent arrangements. At the earliest appropriate opportunity I will then carry out an assessment of the conditions for re-opening the school. Arrangements for re-opening the school will be communicated to parents and pupils via the school's website and other local media.

Should the school require to remain closed for more than one day information will be posted on the school's website to allow pupils to continue with their learning.

Hopefully we will not require to put these arrangements in place. However I trust you will find the information helpful in discussing the issue with your child/children and putting any necessary arrangements in place in the event of an emergency closure.

Thank you for your co-operation and ongoing support.

Yours faithfully

Dean Smith
Head Teacher