

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

This document gives Parents/Carers answers to questions about school closures. If your question is not answered here, please email Education.Services@fife.gov.uk

What kind of school closures are there?

- **Emergency** - where the building cannot open as there is no running water, the heating is not working or power failure.
- **Planned** - Where the school building is closed for elections, industrial action or when utility companies are doing planned maintenance work to gas, water or electric services in the area and all services are to be shut off. Schools are notified in advance of these closures and Headteachers will notify Parents/Carers of these closures.
- **Severe Weather** - Headteachers will make the decision locally to close where severe weather prevents the school from opening.

How will I find out if my child's school is closed?

- The most efficient way is via the school through their Groupcall text message and email service. **Please make sure that your school has up to date contact details from you.**
- Headteachers will make the decision as early as possible on the night before or day of the closure and will contact you once this is confirmed. Messages from Groupcall, will be automatically sent to your mobile phone and/or email account.
- Schools may also use other methods of contacting Parents/Carers, such as school bag mail.
- Please note that text alerts and email issued via mobile network providers, may be delayed where there is high volume on mobile networks or the internet. Therefore, you should also make use of the other communication channels referred to in this document.

When will I receive further email or text alerts?

- You will only receive further messages when the status of a school changes. The first text/email will be sent when the school closes and a further text/email will be sent only once the school reopens. If a school remains closed over more than one day, there will be no further messages sent until the school reopens.

My child has recently moved school?

- If your child has moved to a new school or from a primary school to a high school in August 2020, you should ensure that the new school has your consent to use your email and mobile number details to send you messages relating to school closures.

SEVERE WEATHER

What can Parents/Carers expect in cases of severe weather?

- The Education Service aims to maintain service delivery during severe weather and to minimise disruption to pupils and Parents/Carers.
- Where necessary, Headteachers will close their school as early as possible the night before or on the first morning of severe weather, to allow text/email messages to be issued as quickly.
- On very rare occasions, there may be the need to implement a blanket closure that may affect parts or all of Fife. Updates will be provided through the communication channels below.
- Janitorial staff will prioritise the clearing of one pathway per school as an access route for all building users. **This may not be your usual route into the school and it may not be the quickest route through the building.**
- Where there is heavy snowfall in Fife, resources will be deployed to the worst hit areas and therefore the clearing of playgrounds and car parks will not be a priority until all schools can open.
- It may not be possible to have all School Crossing Patrol Officers on duty during the worst of the weather. You should make arrangements to ensure the safety of your child to and from school.

What are the main channels of communication during severe weather?

- **By text or email through your school** – make sure that you provide your mobile number and email address details to the school so that they can contact you by Groupcall
- **Online** - All the news and information you'll need is online. Visit www.fife.gov.uk and click on 'News Centre' for up to date information. Also, check the website of your own school.
- **Follow-us** on facebook.com/fifecouncil and twitter.com/fifecouncil
- **Listen** to Kingdom FM, Forth One and Tay FM

My child is transported to school by bus, will the services still operate?

- For those pupils who are transported to school by bus, please check www.fife.gov.uk, Facebook or twitter for information which will be received from local bus companies.
- Further details on the status and route of your school bus may be obtained by calling your bus operator direct. The telephone number is available from your timetable or from the QR code on your bus pass.
- Buses may not be able to enter housing schemes to collect pupils from designated bus stops and may only be able to stop at the main road to pick up pupils. Pupils should therefore make their way to main roads and congregate at the nearest bus stop if this applies.
- Should a bus become stranded or experience engine failure en route, pupils should remain in the bus or on the roadside as instructed by the driver. The driver will contact the depot and arrange for relief transport or repair so that the journey can continue. The depot will make contact with the school so that parents/carers can be made aware of the situation and of the action being taken.
- Pupils transported by taxis/mini-bus, may also possibly experience disruption during severe weather. In extreme weather conditions, the operators may not be able to provide transport from some or all the addresses on their route. Operators are expected, as far as possible, to make an attempt to contact these parents to advise them.

How can my child continue with their studies when the school is closed?

- Pupils can access revision material on line, via school websites as well as use the materials and past papers which may have already been provided by their teachers.
- Many Higher and Advanced Higher courses are provided for via the internet through the Scholar program. Pupils studying most subjects can access their Scholar accounts on scholar.hw.ac.uk which provides tutorials, examination questions and E-assessments.
- Pupils who have access to their Glow accounts will find a range of information that will be very helpful. Please make sure that your child retains their username and password for access.
- BBC, Channel 4 and Learning and Teaching Scotland websites provide very good materials for revision.

How can I find out if school events have been cancelled in cases of severe weather?

- Where a school has closed on the morning of severe weather, it is likely that any evening events planned for that day will also be cancelled. Updates will be provided on www.fife.gov.uk, Facebook and Twitter. Schools may also use Groupcall to notify you.
- "Community use" schools will not open when a school has been closed during the day.

Please stay safe and warm: make sure that you allow extra time for any journeys made during severe weather and that you and pupils are dressed appropriately for the conditions and are wearing suitable footwear with grips.