

Calderbank Primary School  
and Nursery Class

Emergency Closure Policy  
November 2015

## **Communication**

Communication regarding widespread closing of establishments should, where possible, be communicated to heads of establishment prior to any announcement on NL Website.

Head Teacher will communicate with whole staff via email unless indicated by staff member of no email access. Then the Head Teacher will communicate with staff via text message.

The importance of good communication with parents/carers and the general public cannot be over-emphasised and heads of establishments should use any other means at their disposal. It is essential that the heads of establishments regularly update information about pupil emergency contacts as part of the establishment communication policy. Parents will be notified annually of where to seek information regarding 'Adverse Weather' updates and encouraged to check NL Website and the school twitter account. In addition each child will receive an 'Adverse Weather' workbook in preparation of the winter and the Primary 6 and Primary 7 stages will be encouraged to use GLOW for additional work and class teacher contact.

The police radio announcements about road journeys in adverse weather conditions mainly have a traffic perspective. They take account of local road conditions and aim to avoid blocked roads, accidents and stranded travellers. Clearly, these must be considered in any emergency closure decision. Similarly, individual staff will wish to take cognisance of such warnings in deciding how to travel to work at the beginning of the day.

The NL Website will be updated at approximately 7.00am in the times of prolonged bad weather. The service would aim to update the website and other electronic forms of communication frequently during severe weather.

During the winter period, additional communication channels to learning and leisure services will operate. The office will be staffed from 8.15am each day in normal circumstances and on an extended basis if the service is affected by adverse weather. In such circumstances new dedicated lines and answerphone facilities will operate on 01236 812251.

Heads of establishment should not make direct contact with the media or the press officer in emergency closure situations. All such communications must be channelled through learning and leisure services.

## **Possible Causes of Closure**

From time to time circumstances arise which can lead to the emergency closure of Learning and Leisure Services establishments. Examples of such circumstances include severely inclement weather, abnormal temperatures, burst pipes and disruption to fuel, power or water supplies. The length of closure may vary from an early closure for a brief period with a return to normal on the following day to a closure for one or more full days.

The guiding principles in such circumstances should be the safety and welfare of all users of the building at all times and the minimum disruption to the normal service.

Establishments should be closed only in circumstances where there are justified concerns for the safety of pupils, staff and users. Inconvenience, discomfort or travel delays do not necessarily constitute good reason for an early closure.

Large numbers of pupils or staff failing to arrive is not an immediate justification for closing the establishment. Judgements about dismissing pupils, staff or users should be based on the individual circumstances for that establishment. Where emergency circumstances are unique to an individual establishment, consultation with a member of the senior leadership team prior to a closure decision is essential. However, this may not be possible in severe weather when a large number of establishments are attempting to make contact. In such circumstances, where there is a risk to pupil or staff or users safety it is appropriate for heads to decide on closure under delegated responsibilities. The head of establishment must communicate this decision to SLT as soon as communication links are re-established.

### **Staff**

Members of staff who are unable to travel to their normal establishment should report to the North Lanarkshire establishment nearest to their home. If this journey also proves impossible contact should be made with the base establishment for further advice. Members of staff reporting to another establishment are not expected to maintain normal service provision. The expectation is that they will support that establishment in ensuring the health and safety of users, for example by supervising classes or pupil groups.

*If such staff report to their nearest authority establishment the head should record their name and establishment and either make use of their general support or provide them with access to study/preparation facilities.*

### **Early Closure**

Early closure should be considered only when the circumstances are such that it is impossible to continue to make reasonable provision. Heads of establishments should make every effort to provide a service for as long as possible and for as many users as possible. Where feasible, consideration should be given to partial rather than full closure.

When considering early closure, heads of establishments should give regard to the health and welfare of pupils/staff and users. Where emergency circumstances are unique to an individual establishment, consultation with a member of the senior management team prior to a closure decision is essential. However, this may not be possible in severe weather when a large number of establishments are attempting to make contact. In such circumstances, where there is a risk to pupil/staff/service users safety, it is appropriate for the Head to decide on closure under delegated responsibilities. Heads of establishments must communicate this decision and provide full justification as soon as the communication links are re-established with the senior management team.

Head of establishments should give particular regard to the safety of young people in considering emergency closures. They should ensure a standard of care for each pupil as would be expected of a responsible parent. Arrangements should take account of the age, ability and capacities of the pupils concerned; the location of the establishment in relation to

pupils' homes, road traffic and other hazards; the home circumstances of the pupils; and any other emergency arrangements. This also applies to pupils in off-campus locations.

No early years, primary and ASN pupils should be sent home without ensuring that an adult presence is available. In the absence of parental/carer acknowledgement or consent to the amended time of dismissal; or acceptance of responsibility for the reception of the pupil by an adult nominated by the parent as an emergency contact, supervision and care must be provided until such arrangements are made.

Early years children must not be sent home but must be collected by parents/carers or their designated emergency contacts.

Primary children must not be sent home but must be collected by parents/carers or their designated emergency contacts.

ASN children must not be sent home but must be collected by parents/carers or their designated emergency contacts in the event that normal transport arrangements are not in operation.

Full Day or Extended Closure

In more extreme circumstances than those resulting in an early closure it may be necessary to consider the closure of an establishment for one or more days.

These may include emergencies such as fire, burst pipes and heating or power failure which occur outwith normal hours with the result that unless immediate remedial action is taken the establishment will be unable to open.

## **Staff**

The arrangements for staff attendance will depend on the situation in each establishment. While the welfare of pupils and maintaining as much of the service as possible remain paramount, consideration must also be given to the welfare of staff. Where conditions allow, staff are expected to attend and work as normal a day as possible. It is important that all staff be treated equitably.

Special consideration should be given to the position of disabled employees for whom undertaking journeys to and from work in adverse weather may present particular risks. Examples of such risks are: those with mobility problems who may have particular difficulties travelling; disabled employees who may not have access to medication or the means of managing their condition; disabled employees who may have difficulty attending an alternative workplace as they may be unable to access it and function within it.

Consideration should also be given to pregnant employees who may have difficulty walking for long journeys in adverse weather.

Where it is impracticable for all members of staff to attend, a nucleus of staff should where possible be present during normal working hours to deal with enquiries and maintain contact with Learning and Leisure Services headquarters. At the very least, every effort should be made to ensure the presence of a member of the senior management team and janitorial staff.

If it is not possible for the switchboard to be manned or for the establishment to receive or make telephone calls, telephone numbers at which the head or his/her representative and a

member of the janitorial staff can be contacted should be provided to the relevant section within Learning & Leisure Services.

As part of the contingency plan heads of establishments should consider how staff who are not expected to attend, or who for some reason are prevented from attending, can best be kept in touch with the day to day position at the establishments for example a planned telephone ladder system. Where feasible, staff are expected to report to their nearest North Lanarkshire Council Learning and Leisure Services establishment if a journey to their normal place of work is totally impracticable.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSURE OF EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS**

### **ABNORMAL TEMPERATURES**

1. School heating systems are designed to standards which should ensure that room temperatures reach the levels indicated below when the outside air temperature is at freezing point.

<b>Type of Accommodation</b>	<b>Temperatures</b>	
Medical inspection room, changing room, bathroom, water closer and shower room	18.5 °C	(65 °F)
Teaching space, dining room, nursery room, common room, staff room and office areas	17 °C	(62°F)
Assembly area, lecture hall, theatre and cinema	15.5 °C	(60 °F)
Sickroom	14.5 °C	(58 °F)
Cloakroom	13 °C	(55 °F)
Gymnasium	13 °C	(55 °F)
Games hall	10 °C	(50 °F)

2. On the relatively infrequent occasions when outside temperatures are below freezing point in the morning, and the indoor temperature is correspondingly lower, this should not in itself regarded as a reason for sending pupils home. Normally, temperatures will rise during daylight hours.
3. Where there is a complete breakdown in the heating system or where the temperatures have not risen to those indicated in the above table by one hour after the start of the school day, heads of establishments should inform Northline's Customer Contact Centre (08006781166) which will in turn inform Property Services of the fault (if the janitor has not already done so) and should then act in accordance with the advice in Management Circular No. 10a.
4. From time to time the temperatures in some parts of the building may rise above a maximum tolerable temperature limit. Temperature in itself is not an index of discomfort. Other factors such as humidity, radiation, ventilation and length of exposure must be considered.

5. Where staff have taken all reasonable precautions such as opening windows and doors, drawing of curtains or blinds to prevent high internal temperatures but this action fails and a temperature of 27°C (80°F) in the shade has been experienced for a minimum of one hour, it is recommended that pupils and staff should be withdrawn from that area. If the temperature rises considerably in excess of 27°C, evacuation of the area should take place within a shorter period.

