



## **Emergency Closure Procedure**

## UNAVOIDABLE SCHOOL CLOSURES POLICY

It may be necessary to temporarily close the school for a variety of reasons including:

- Severe weather including snow, flooding or storms
- Mass medical emergencies to children or staff
- A major incident in the locality of the school where emergency services or the local authority have advised the school to be closed.
- Problems with the school site, for example loss of power supply, heating failures, hygiene problems due to lack of hot water, or fire damage
- Longer term disruption to transport, for example through petrol or diesel shortages

### Closure due to severe weather

The decision to close a school will normally rest with the Principal, (or in their absence a member of Academy's Senior Leadership Team) and be confirmed with the Chair of Governors (or if they are unavailable, the Vice Chair) The Trust and the Local Authority. The decision should be made where possible before 7.30am and on the basis of information received from the media about weather, supplemented by on the spot observation, either personally or from staff members better placed to make such observations and through appropriate external agencies such as the Met Office.

Factors involved in reaching the decision to close the school are likely to be:

- Access to the school, i.e. road conditions (obstructions, snow, ice, flooding etc). This will also require dialogue with school transport providers.
- Breakdown of school essential services (heating, electrical services, water, storm damage etc).
- The number of staff that can reach the site.

The Principal will advise staff and parents of any school closure through the school website, twitter feed and broadcast on Key 103 radio. During periods of possible disruption due to bad weather or premises issues, the Principal will advise parents and pupils to listen to any local radio station. Closures will be considered on a daily basis.

The whole school community, should be made regularly aware of this procedure as incidents can occur with little or no warning.

### School closure during school hours

On occasions it may be necessary for school to close during the school day i.e. if the weather is deteriorating and there is doubt as to whether children can be safely returned home later in the day. In such cases the school will ensure that children are collected from school. The school Critical Incident Plan (see Critical Incident Plan) may also apply. In these cases the school will place information on the school website and school twitter feed, informing parents of the closure. Parents who are subsequently unable to collect their child and need to make alternative arrangements should telephone the school. It may be necessary to obtain verbal permission from parents for their child to be collected by another named parent. In the event of a 'during the school day' closure the same procedures of informing parents, the Trust and Local Authority will apply.

### Staff attendance

Although it is recognised that severe weather conditions make it difficult for staff to get to and from work, unless advised to the contrary by the Principal, then the expectation is that staff will present themselves for work. Travel to work/school is regarded by both the Police and the Council's Highways Management as an essential journey, and every effort should be made to get to work unless it is known that your

school has closed or you consider it unsafe to do so. Contract Staff (Catering and Cleaning Services) if appropriate also need to be advised of any emergency requirements.

#### Clearance of Snow Within the School Site

The school is responsible for snow clearance and the clearing of approach paths is the specific task of the Site Manager. (See appropriate policy). The clearance of public roads is the responsibility of the Highways Department.

#### In the Event of School Being Closed

If a school is closed it is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the following events happen:

- The decision is ratified with the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors and The Trust
- The school website has been updated with closure information
- The information is passed to the Local Authority as soon as possible
- The school office answer phone (where technology allows) is amended to a short closure message.
- Where possible, notices are placed on both school entrances advising visitors, parents and pupils that school is closed
- School is appropriately staffed by teachers/teaching assistants to deal with any pupils who arrive at school unescorted until parents or emergency contacts can collect the pupils. These tasks do not all have to be completed by the Principal, although they have the overall responsibility for ensuring each has been carried out.