



School Closure Contingency Policy

Ratified: February 2019
Chair of Governors: Charlotte Jeffery
Review: February 2022

Cuffley School Closure Contingency Policy

Rationale

The DfE advises:

'As school staff and governors will appreciate, school closures disrupt children's education and make life very difficult for working parents who may not be able to make childcare arrangements at short notice. This in turn disrupts the services and businesses in which those parents work. Schools should therefore plan for severe weather on the assumption that they will generally stay open.'

The Headteacher and Governing Body of Cuffley School recognise the importance of avoiding school closure in order to ensure that the pupils' education is not adversely affected. In the event of hazardous weather conditions, or other serious circumstances such as power cuts, heating breakdowns, etc., the priority of the Headteacher and Governing Body is to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all pupils, staff and visitors to the school site. Closure of the school may therefore be necessary in order to minimise these risks.

Guidelines

1 School Closure

In the event of adverse weather or other serious circumstance, any decision to close the school will be made by the **Headteacher** or, in her absence, the Deputy Headteacher. This decision will be made after a careful assessment of the weather forecast, the conditions on the main routes to and from school, the condition of the side roads or after undertaking a risk assessment on site in consultation with the Site Manager and other professionals if necessary. In the event of a decision being taken to close the school, the following procedure will be implemented:

- In the case of adverse weather, the Headteacher will assess the situation at 06.30 or as soon as possible thereafter. All staff to inform the Headteacher by 6:45am if they are unable to travel to school.
- Any decision to close the school will be made by 07.00 if practically possible and this will be communicated to staff and parents through the school website and Everbridge, Hertfordshire's School Closure Notification System. Parents are encouraged to register their details on the Everbridge website: <https://member.everbridge.net/index/892807736725489#/signup>. **The Headteacher** will request that a similar statement be put up on the school's Facebook and Twitter pages and the **Headteacher** will update the Local Authority website. Due to adverse weather, some of the above may not always be possible, therefore parents are expected to sign up to Everbridge and to check the school's website.
- The School Office (SO) will ensure that a message is placed on the phone system.
- The SO will be responsible for checking the school diary and ensuring that all visitors are alerted to the closure and advise the **Head Teacher** of other relevant diary concerns. The SO will also advise the Cook Manager.
- The Premises Manager will advise the Cleaning Contractors.
- A similar risk assessment will be made the next day as to whether or not the school will be remaining closed. Staff will be informed via email by the

Headteacher by 3PM. The school phone message and website will also be updated and a text sent to families by 3PM.

- There may be other serious circumstances or reasons which would result in closure of the school; in this instance the same policy and procedure applies, however the timeframes will change according to the situation.

If the Premises Manager (and other local staff) are able to access the site, they will endeavour to make the school safe and accessible for a return as soon as possible.

It is critical that, for this system to work effectively, that all contact details are kept up to date and, equally importantly, they are accessible from home.

2 School Remaining Open

2.1 In the event of the school remaining open during adverse weather conditions, **staff have a duty to make every effort to report to school as normal, in order to ensure that classes are adequately supervised and receive their usual curriculum entitlement.**

2.2 It is essential, however, to minimise personal risk when travelling to/from school. Staff are therefore advised to assess local conditions and **plan sufficient time to travel** to the school safely; it may be sensible to use Public Transport where possible.

2.3 In the event of a member of staff being unable to reach the school he/she should contact the **Headteacher** by text or phone. In such circumstances, they may then be advised to complete Planning, Preparation and Assessment at home in the morning and attempt the journey later in the day when roads have been cleared; alternatively, the member of staff may be advised to stay at home all day and undertake Planning Preparation and Assessment activities.

2.4 The **Headteacher** will continue to monitor weather conditions during the day. If the weather continues to deteriorate, a decision may be made to close early and parents will be contacted by text.

3 Pupil Safety

Pupil safety remains paramount throughout.

In extreme weather conditions staff must remind the children of the need to wear suitable clothing. It is obviously suitable to wear boots to school but, on arrival, a change of footwear is required to minimise the snow and ice brought in to the building. Although pupils are expected to enter classrooms on arrival at school at 08.55, it is important that the SLT actively ensure that children do not linger in the playground before this time.

If there are other serious circumstances, such as a power cut or heating failure, children will be carefully supervised and advised on how to conduct themselves, until arrangements can be made for children to go home.

All accidents or incidents should be reported using the usual reporting systems.

Conclusion

Providing an educational service of the highest standard, together with ensuring the safety of pupils, staff and members of our local community, are of paramount importance. It is, therefore, important that all stakeholders adhere to the guidelines within this policy in order that the services offered by the school are maintained to the highest level possible and that safety is not compromised.