



BLETCHINGLEY VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Emergency School Closure Policy and Procedures

The purpose of the document is to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and employees during severe weather or other emergency situations;
- Ensure that all employees and parents are clear about their roles and responsibilities in the event of severe weather or school closures.

The decision to close a school unexpectedly is never taken lightly. Our policy is always to remain open if we possibly can, and equally we expect children to attend school if they possibly can.

To avoid school closure, we may consider adjusting the school day, including a later start, earlier finish with reduced playtimes. This both allows staff and parents to travel more safely and ensures that children do not spend too long outside in very low temperatures.

Circumstances in which we would have to consider school closure or adjustments include:

Severe Weather

In the event of severe weather (e.g. snow) the school will make the decision to close when there are insufficient staff able to travel to school or when the buildings and/or grounds would be unsafe. It is likely that the school would have to close on days when Surrey Highways, the police or other authorities give official instructions not to travel by road – however, journeys to school in order to look after and teach children do count as an “essential journey” when such advice is given in order to reduce numbers of cars on the road.

Infectious Sickness/disease

In the event significant numbers of the school population are diagnosed with an infectious illness the school is likely to have to close. This will be done in close consultation with the Health Protection Agency and the Local Authority. The decision to re-open the school will be made by the Head Teacher following advice and/or instructions as above.

Loss of utilities

If the school is without water and/or other utilities, a decision will be made depending on other circumstances e.g. the time of day; the weather; the implications for health and safety. If the school can make interim arrangements without compromising safety, it will do so.

Low levels of staffing – Industrial Action

If Industrial action or other circumstances reduce the numbers of available teaching staff to below safe levels, the school will close to pupils. If the staffing level is higher than this, the school will open but pupil attendance may have to be restricted. The head teacher will always endeavour to open the school for all classes, but cannot ask staff to carry out duties which are different from or additional to their normal duties in order to cover striking colleagues.

Loss of Premises/major accident or emergency

In the event of loss of premises due to fire, flood, bomb threats, vandalism, disturbance of asbestos etc. (during out of school hours) a decision will be made by the head teacher to close part of or the whole school for the following day(s); this decision will be taken after taking advice from emergency services and the Local Authority as to the severity of safety issues. The decision to re-open fully or partially will be made by the head teacher following advice from Health and Safety Executive. The governing body will be notified of

all decisions taken. The Chair of Governors may use the 'Chair's Urgency Powers' in the event of an emergency.

In the event of loss of premises during the school day, the school will follow usual evacuation procedures to ensure all children and staff are safe. Further decisions will be made according to the Emergency Plan.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Governors

- Approve, monitor, evaluate and update the policy as appropriate
- Support and advise school staff in the event of an incident
- Maintain regular contact with the head teacher during any incident

Head Teacher

- Makes the decision to close, once all relevant information is known
- Informs staff via the emergency phone tree
- Informs the Chair of Governors
- Informs the Local Education Officer, who updates the SCC website and notifies partner agencies and school support colleagues
- Ensures that the web-site is regularly updated and that parents are informed via ParentMail
- Informs local radio stations
- Monitors the situation throughout the day and makes a decision about the next day at an appropriate time i.e. early enough to give sufficient notice to stakeholders, but not so early as to risk an unnecessary closure
- Liaises regularly with the Premises Manager to ascertain the safety of the site and to agree priorities for preparing the school for reopening e.g. clearing pathways and car-parks; ensuring heating is working.
- Liaises with the Local Authority (LEO) to obtain advice and guidance throughout the incident.

Senior Staff

- Support the head teacher as above, and as teaching staff below.

Teaching and Support Staff

- Attend work if they possibly can, without taking unreasonable risks or going against direct police advice. This includes planning ahead when severe weather is forecast and for example parking their cars closer to a main road, where minor roads are likely to be impassable, or taking other sensible and reasonable measures such as gritting the driveways. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that they have contingency plans in place in good time e.g. public transport routes; sharing with colleagues; walking all or part of the way. The head teacher may have to consult with the LEO and/or Personnel in the event of a member of staff failing to attend work when they may reasonably have been expected to do so.
- Make sure they are aware of developments during the day if the school has to close
- Communicate regularly and in a timely manner with senior staff, especially if they are unable to travel into school, via their emails and mobile phones
- Work at home as directed by the head teacher during school closures or when they are unable to travel to school
- Provide work for their pupils online, via the school web-site or the VLE, whilst the school is closed
- Provide planning for HLTAs or supply teachers if they are unable to travel to school.

Admin and Premises Staff

- Attend work if they possibly can: see first four bullet points above.
- Support the head teacher in sharing information with the school community; preparing the building for re-opening; making alternative arrangements for lunch times etc as appropriate.

Parents

- Bring their children to school if they can do so without taking unreasonable risks or going against police advice
- Ensure the school has up to date contact details for themselves and for alternative carers/responsible adults e.g. grandparents or a neighbour
- Check the school web site regularly, including looking for work set by the class teacher
- Check the SCC website as an alternative or complementary source of information
- Seek advice and take appropriate decisions about keeping children at home when they are unwell and may be infectious
- Ensure children are appropriately dressed during severe weather when the school is open.

Monitoring and Review

The policy and procedures are monitored and evaluated whenever they have to be implemented and improvements made as appropriate. The policy will be updated in line with these improvements after consultation with stakeholders and approval from the Governing Body.