



Moorlands Primary School

High Expectations, High Achievements, Challenge and Enjoyment for All

Emergency Closure Policy

Name of Policy Writer/Amendments	Date Written/Amended	Next Review Date	Approved by Governors
Becky Freeman	November 2016	May 2018	Nov 2016
Becky Freeman	May 2018	May 2020	May 2018

Guidance and procedures for Emergency School Closure

The local Authority together with the governors is committed to ensuring that the school is open for pupils for the statutory 190 days per school year. However, it is recognised that there may be times when, for health and safety reasons, it is necessary for there to be an emergency closure.

Emergency closure occurs in exceptional circumstances:

- Where there is loss of an essential service to the school which cannot be compensated by alternative provision
- Where damage to a particular part of the school cannot be compensated by alternative provision
- Where there are severe weather conditions adversely affecting access to school.

Emergency school closures close the school for pupils and staff. **Emergency closure days are working days.**

As soon as the school is aware of a loss of an essential service e.g., failure of boiler, or prolonged cut in water or electricity service, the premises section should be informed. This section will be able to provide guidance and help which may enable the school to remain open during the loss of service.

If the advice from Premises Section is that the school should be closed, the Headteacher should notify Schools Section and implement the procedure for the emergency closure.

There are times when weather conditions are so severe that the Headteacher may consider that the health and safety of the pupils and staff are best served by closing the school. Under no circumstances will children be sent home early. Parents requesting to take their children home early because of the weather conditions will be allowed to do so. **Ensuring they are signed out at the office.**

In the case of very severe weather conditions parents and children will be informed as they arrive at school of the decision regarding a closure. At this point only accompanied children would be allowed to return home. Any parent subsequently arranging to collect their children would be allowed to take them home. The decision may be made to close the following day because of severe weather forecasts. The LA would be consulted about any intentions to close and parents would be informed via the school website, Radio Leeds, and or pupil post.

When exceptionally severe weather conditions are forecast for the whole authority and the police are recommending that only essential journeys should be made, the Chief Education Officer may take the decision to close all schools to pupils the following day.

If this decision is made early enough, i.e. prior to 2.30pm, the Education Service will attempt to contact Headteachers at school.

If the decision is reached later than 2.30pm, the education Service will attempt to contact Heads at school or at home prior to 7.00pm.

Any announcements about closure will be placed on the Kirklees website, School website and Radio Leeds. The announcement will state "Schools are Closed to Pupils". It is possible that a number of pupils will attend school because their parents have not heard or seen the announcement; therefore contingency plans for the pupils' safety will be made. The paramount consideration in the decision to close **must be pupil safety**.

If the school is closed for reasons of loss of essential services, staff **must** still report for duty and will be deployed by the Headteacher in such circumstances.

If the reason for closure is severe weather conditions, it must be remembered that this is still a working day for staff and work will be set by the Headteacher for the days of closure.

It is expected that members of staff who can get to school either by walking or other means will do so. They would then look after children who were in school or undertake other tasks as deployed by the Headteacher or other senior staff. The first person to arrive in school will take calls in the school office.

Any member of staff unable to attend if conditions are such that attending is inappropriate or travelling is unsafe, should telephone the school on 01484 655800, the Headteacher or deputy Headteacher. Consideration will be given to travel arrangements and the safety of staff. Information about whether school is closed to pupils will be found on the LA website www.kirklees.gov.uk/schoolclosures, school website www.moorlandsprimary.org.uk and Radio Leeds.

The local authority would normally regard teaching staff as working within directed time in such circumstances and would not therefore see a need to make a salary reduction. The Head may decide that some teaching staff are more effectively employed on school related tasks at home.

Administrative staff and classroom support staff may have appropriate tasks to undertake in school. If the closure is for reasons of loss of essential services, they should report to work as normal. If the reason for closure is severe weather, then those who can safely report for duty should do so and will be deployed as necessary.

APT&C staff have specific local conditions which state

“When an employee is delayed or prevented from attending work due to inclement weather, public transport disruption or similar circumstances, the Authority does not accept responsibility to pay for hours of work lost. However, the Authority will allow employees in such circumstances to work additional hours to make up any time lost to avoid any reduction in their salary” This refers to conditions where the employee cannot get to work, rather than the place of work being closed.

As previously stated, the prime consideration is the safety of pupils and staff and the policy and procedures should be implemented with reasonableness and common sense prevailing.

Advice to Parents

It is recognised that parents have a key role to play in the event of severe weather. If they have concerns about bringing their children to and from the school, they should “play safe” and keep them at home, informing the school that they are doing so. The fact that several parents take this view does not, however, mean that the school will be closed, unless the considerations listed above indicate that this is the only sensible decision.

Communication Arrangements

It is essential that, when there is potential for school closures due to severe weather conditions, we are in a position to communicate quickly and clearly with parents.

The Kirklees and Moorlands School websites are an important information channel in these situations. Any decision to close should be taken as early in the day as possible, or if feasible notification should be provided the evening before. The Emergency School Closure procedure should be used to communicate the decision. This will involve putting an announcement on the Kirklees website, Moorlands website, Twitter, local radio and texting parents and staff. This will be reviewed every 24 hours.