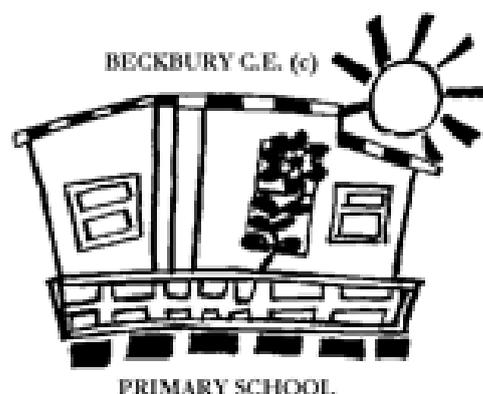


The Trinity Federation

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURES POLICY



Policy for Emergency School Closures

Rationale

It may be necessary to temporarily close one or more of the schools within the Trinity Federation for a variety of reasons including:

- Severe weather including snow, flooding or storms
- Disruption to transport, for example through petrol or diesel shortages
- Accommodation problems, for example loss of power supply, heating failures or fire damage
- A major incident in the locality of the school where emergency services or the local authority have advised the school to be closed

Schools should, however, endeavour to remain open where possible. School contingency plans should be passed on to staff, parents and pupils.

Closure due to severe weather

The decision to close a school will normally rest with the Executive Headteacher (or in her absence the Director of Teaching and Learning) and be confirmed with the Chair of Governors (or if he is unavailable, the Vice Chair). 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 Executive Headteacher will advise staff and parents of any school closure through the text service. During periods of possible disruption due to bad weather or premises issues, the Executive Headteacher will advise parents and pupils to listen to any local radio station and monitor the local authority website shropshire.gov.uk/school-closures

Closures will be considered on a daily basis and the closure list on the local authority website will be cleared at the turn of each day. During periods of widespread severe weather, the local authority operates a Helpline for parents which will work alongside the school closure pages of the website.

The Executive Headteacher will contact the Local Authority in the event of an emergency closure. The Council's website will be updated on receipt of school contact. All radio stations are informed by the council so that they can relay information to the public.

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

During School Day Closure Guidance

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 emergency management plan may also apply. In these cases the school will send out a text message 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 the Local Authority will apply. Radio Stations will usually relay this information.

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 Executive Headteacher, 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 cleaner in charge. See Gritting 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 Executive Headteacher to ensure that the following events happen

- The decision is ratified with the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors

- The text service to staff and parents is implemented.
- 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 Executive Headteacher, although they have the overall responsibility for ensuring each has been carried out.

Reviewed: November 2016

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