

Severe Weather Policy

(Health & Safety)

2016



"Learning, Caring, Growing Stronger Together."

Agreed by Staff	
Agreed by Governors	

Health & Safety Policy

Agree Date	Review Date	Person Responsible
2016	2018	Mr R Smith

Ashgrove Primary School is committed to safeguarding the Health and Safety of its pupils, parents and employees, and as such, may have to close the School during exceptional circumstances. In doing so, we will ensure that any disruption to the normal functioning of the School will remain minimal, whilst not compromising the safety and well-being of all who enter the premises.

What is an Exceptional Closure?

"An Exceptional Closure is unplanned and is due to unforeseen circumstances such as adverse weather conditions, power failure or situations which affect the safety of pupils and staff. Exceptional Closures require approval from the Department of Education to allow a school to reduce its operational days below the 200 required by legislation."

How will Ashgrove Primary School decide if we need to close?

Although it may not always be possible to make such a decision, where feasible, and in order to facilitate early communication with parents and staff, the Principal, in consultation with the Chair of the Governors, will endeavour to plan for an exceptional closure as far in advance of the actual closure as possible i.e. the afternoon/ night before the closure if circumstances allow.

Decisions the afternoon/ night before can only be taken when all the indications are that the conditions affecting the Nursery School will continue overnight. If there are doubts, the Principal will defer decisions until early morning.

Refer to Criteria to be considered for Closure.

Extreme Weather conditions such as snow, wind and rain.

1. We will take in to account local conditions and in consultation with the Building Supervisor (Mr N Douglas) will conduct a risk assessment of the grounds and premises of Ashgrove Primary School.
2. The Principal will seek to consult with the Principal of our neighbour Ashgrove Nursery School- (Mrs J Barr). However any decisions made will be applicable to our own school and not based on neighbouring schools whose conditions may be different to ours.

CRITERIA TO BE CONSIDERED FOR CLOSURE

1. Can parents, pupils and staff access the school building safely?
2. Are pedestrian routes in to school safe and accessible- has grit been applied?
3. Can pupils and staff be evacuated in an emergency?
4. Lack of parking facilities is already an issue for both the Nursery and Ashgrove Primary School and as such, is parking at all possible within the vicinity of both school grounds, until remedial action has been taken to make the area passable?
5. In an emergency, could the Emergency Services access the school?
6. Have local weather forecasts and road conditions, including those for areas from which staff will be travelling, been considered?
7. Are there any areas within the school locality particularly impassable or dangerous in times of extreme bad weather?
8. Are there any N. Ireland Met Office warnings available?

9. Can the school premises be heated?
10. Is there provision of water for sanitary use or drinking?

Other considerations

1. Can enough Teaching Staff and Classroom Assistants attend school to ensure the adequate supervision of pupils?
2. Is the severe weather likely to clear quickly and allow safe access to the school building?

The above questions will form part of our Risk Assessment.

CLOSURE BEFORE ASHGROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL OPENS

Ashgrove Primary School has contact details for all parents/guardians, pupils and staff. We also make use of CallParents (Text Service) (Hard copies of contacts with Secretary, Principal and Assistant Teacher as backup). Parents are requested and reminded to update of any changes to contact details on a regular basis. This is their responsibility which they are made aware of this frequently throughout the year.

- Ashgrove Primary School Building Supervisor (Mr N Douglas) will have visited the school site prior to 7:30 a.m. to assess the viability of the Primary School opening, taking account of the factors as detailed previously in this policy.
- Ashgrove Primary School Building Supervisor will then contact the Principal immediately by telephone call in order that he may make an informed decision and agree a way forward with the Chairman of the Board of Governors.
- Should it be required, the Principal will also liaise with the Principal of Ashgrove Nursery School.
- The Nursery School Principal will then inform the Secretary and Staff of the school as a matter of urgency.
- Parents and staff will be informed of an exceptional closure through the CallParents Text Service, the Principal and Secretary have login details. BBC NI will be contacted, in the absence of the Principal the VP (Miss R Taylor) will assume responsibility for this. This information will only be accepted if the school uses the supplied security code. Details of closures will be emailed with the school's information to ni_news@bbc.co.uk The details will then be shared on the Northern Ireland news website at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ninews>
- Regular communication with the Building Supervisor/ Principal of the Nursery School is central to this plan/ policy- this is the responsibility of both parties.
- If possible, parents/staff will also be updated at a later time in the day with a view to the "next day" so that all have time to make suitable family arrangements.

CLOSURE DURING SCHOOL HOURS

- Parents will be informed, again through the CallParents system within the School. (Secretary will take responsibility for this - in her absence - The Principal).
- Should the Internet not be working - all parents will be contacted by mobile phone using the hard copy Home contact details available in the School Office.
- Should a parent not be able to be contacted or a child cannot be picked up by parent/carer, additional contacts provided by parents for collection purposes throughout the year will be used as the next means of communication.
- The Principal & Class Teacher will not leave the premises for home until all children have

been collected by a person nominated by the parent.

- If possible, parents/staff will be updated at a later time in the day with a view to the "next day" so that all have time to make suitable family arrangements.

FURTHER STRATEGIES IN PLACE

- Heating, lighting and water services will be regularly maintained either through the EA Manhattan Help Desk or directly through the School.
- During severe weather conditions or when they are predicted, the heating system will run for periods of time during the night and during periods of closure or holidays by setting the timer appropriately (Building Supervisor's responsibility).
- The Building Supervisor will be responsible for the laying down of salt at the beginning/end of the school day, should conditions require this approach to be taken. Sufficient supplies of salt for application to footpaths and the car park area will be maintained.
- Safety Signs and Hazard Warning Tapes will be available in school for cordoning off hazardous areas. They will be kept in the veranda store and reordered as supplies become low.
- The Building Supervisor will make regular checks of the premises, both inside and out to ensure that the School is safe and fit for purpose at all times. Any perceived hazards (such as fallen down branches etc. in snowy or windy circumstances) will be removed by the Building Supervisor, where physically practicable and with EA Health and Safety requirements being adhered to at all times. Any such incidents and those of a more serious matter, will be reported by the Building Supervisor to the Principal, who may then, on some occasions, make a decision on any possible further course of action required e.g. reporting to Education Authority (North Eastern Region) Maintenance Department for response/ support/ guidance.
- Local contact details for other services will be held on computer and a written copy will also be maintained e.g. NI Met Office www.metoffice.gov.uk

RELEVANT CONTACT DETAILS

Education Authority, North Eastern Region:

hilary.spence@ea.org.uk

nigel.freeburn@ea.org.uk

Tel: 02825 662296

www.eani.org.uk/ea-regional-offices/north-eastern-region

Education Authority, North Eastern Region

Out of Hours Emergency Frost Damage Helpline Tel: 028 25 635155

Department of Education Curriculum Support Team: curriculum.supportteam@deni.gov.uk

Tel: 02891 279533