

YEWSTOCK SCHOOL



School Closure Policy

Status: Recommended

Introduction

It may be necessary to close school 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, or other damage to the site and building
- Industrial action by key staff
- Extra public holidays
- Instances of widespread infectious disease or sickness such as norovirus

School will; however, endeavour to remain open where possible. School contingency plans will be passed on to staff, parents and pupils as soon as possible through letter, phone or school website.

Closure due to severe weather

The decision to close a school will normally rest with the Headteacher or in his absence the Deputy Headteacher. The decision will be made where possible before 7.00 am 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. This decision will be confirmed with the Chair of Governors or if he is unavailable the Vice Chair as soon as possible.

Factors involved in reaching the decision to close the school due to severe weather are likely to be:

- Access to the school, i.e. road conditions (obstructions, snow, ice, flooding etc)
- Breakdown of school essential services (heating, electrical services, water, storm damage etc)
- Damage to the school site or building

The Headteacher will advise staff, Governors, parents and pupils to check the school website www.yewstock.dorset.sch.uk, listen to local radio stations and monitor their websites where details of any closures will be published:

Wessex FM

Heart FM

BBC Radio Solent

Breeze Radio

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YEWSTOCK SCHOOL

Parents will receive a text informing them of any school closure.

Parents are also able to confirm transport arrangement with school transport on

01305 224 683

The whole school community, including the Extended Schools Services, 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 returned home later in the day. In such cases school needs to ensure that children are collected from the site. The school will make every possible attempt to contact a family member in the case of early closure, so that pupils are received by a parent or carer from the school transport.

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 Headteacher, then the expectation is that staff will present themselves for work. Staff arrangements for contact will be the same as parents, though alternative 'snowball' arrangements may be in place for staff who make long journeys into school and therefore have early starts.

Contractors may also need to be advised of any emergency requirements. The site manager will contact them in the first instance.

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 Site Manager. When severe weather is forecast, the caretaker should be tasked to lay salt and grit on arrival. The condition of the school site will be a factor taken into account when deciding on school closure.

The clearance of public roads is the responsibility of the Highways Department. In the past Honeymead Lane has not been a priority for gritting and, as the school is at the bottom of the hill, there have been some dangerous incidents. The decision to close the school will also take into account the road safety situation reported by school transport.

If there is any question of children's safety being at risk, for instance if they are let out at break time and the playground area is unsafe, school has a responsibility in inclement weather to keep the children indoors.

In the Event of School Being Closed

If school is closed it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that the following events happen:

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YEWSTOCK SCHOOL

- The school website is updated
- The Parent/Staff Text Messaging Service is implemented
- The information is passed to relevant media agencies as soon as possible
- The school office answer phone is amended to a short closure message
- Notices are placed on both school entrances advising visitors, parents and pupils that school is closed
- School is appropriately staffed by teachers/teaching assistants and Governors to deal with any pupils who arrive at school unescorted until parents or emergency contacts can collect them
- School Transport and Dorset LA are informed of the closure
- The decision is confirmed with the Chair of Governors or if he is unavailable the Vice Chair as soon as possible

These tasks do not all have to be completed by the Headteacher, although they have the overall responsibility for ensuring each has been carried out.

This policy to be reviewed as part of a rolling programme of policy review set by the governors.

Date reviewed by P&C Committee: 25th January 2012

Date adopted by governing body 8th February 2012

Date of next review 25th January 2015