

Emergency Closures Policy

Rationale

The need for the school to produce a policy on Emergency Closures is primarily due to :

- Inclement weather, such as heavy snowfalls, high winds
- Ongoing problems with the water supply in the local area
- The Covid-19 pandemic

*The policy for Emergency Closures follows the guidelines for
National Rules for Schools – Rule 60*

Aims and Objectives

- To provide for the welfare of all pupils and staff while on the school premises
- To ensure a safe, child-friendly school environment is available to all children
- To comply with Health and Safety legislation

Procedures

Heavy Snowfall

In the event of a heavy snowfall, the Principal shall consult with the Chairperson of the Board of Management as soon as is feasible, and a decision will be made as to whether it is in the interest of all parties to close the school. If it decided that a school closure is warranted, parents will be informed via the home-school communication app and the school Facebook page. All staff employed by the school, and transport staff will be contacted by the Principal or another designated person, confirming that the school will not be opening. If the snowfall is prolonged over a number of days and the school is closed for a longer period of time, parents and transport operators will be informed by the same methods. The school remote learning plan will be enacted as far as is possible.

Disconnection of Services

Where the water or electricity services are to be disconnected on a planned basis, a week's notice is normally given to the authorities. This enables the school to furnish the parent body with the relevant advance warning of such closures via Facebook and the Home School Communication App. In the case of unplanned interruption in services, the school will endeavour as much as possible to inform parents in a timely manner, ie before school opens. In the event of a loss of services during school hours if transport services are not available to collect children due to other commitments, then parents will be contacted to collect their child.

High Winds/Thunderstorms

The procedures in place for heavy snowfall are generally replicated in the event of storms/high winds. If the school has already opened and is in operation when severe weather conditions occur and remaining on the premises poses a risk to all, parents will be informed by phone. A teacher + one other staff member will remain on site until all the children have been collected by either parents/guardians or transport staff as appropriate.

Critical Incident/Death

In some instances the school might remain closed for pupils in the event of a critical incident or death of a staff member, BOM member or pupil. Parents will be informed of such closures via the Home School Communication App and school Facebook page.

Covid – 19

The school will also have to enact the emergency closure policy if mandated to do so on the advice of a Public Health team following identification of an outbreak of Covid-19 in the school. The school remote learning policy will be enacted at this point.

*It should be noted that the **minimum** staffing levels required for the school to be opened safely is 1 teacher and 2 SNAs per class. This applies to full time and long-term substitute staff only. Individual plans and behaviour support plans will not be followed on these days and that the staff may possibly be unable to maintain the integrity of the Pod system. If behaviours that challenge occur, parents will be asked to come and collect their child immediately.*

Roles and Responsibilities

Emergency Closures in the school place particular responsibilities on various personnel within the school management structure. After consultation with the chairperson, the Principal will inform the class teachers, who will in turn inform parents via the Home School Communication App, requesting that parents verify that they have received the message. The Principal will inform all school staff including transport providers via text or Whatsapp. The same procedure will follow for the re-opening of the school.

Success Criteria

- Positive feedback from the school community
- Compliance with Health and Safety legislation
- Maintenance of a safe school environment for all children and staff.

Ratification and Review

This **Emergency Closures Policy** was reviewed in September 2022 by the in-school management team. It was ratified at the Board of Management meeting on **10th October 2022** and this review will be communicated to all stakeholders via agreed minutes. The policy will then form part of the school plan, which is available to view in reception or can be emailed on request. This policy will be reviewed in light of unforeseen closures, or any guidance or instruction received from Department of Education and Skills/HSE Public Health, but not later than the first term of 2025

Signed:

(Chairperson BOM)

Signed:.....

(Principal)

Date:.....