

Eastcourt Independent School Emergency School Closure Policy

1. Taking the Decision to Close the School

The Headteacher and Deputy Head in consultation with other members of staff will take the decision to make an emergency closure when the state of the weather or any other exceptional circumstance make it absolutely necessary in the best interests of the pupils and staff.

However this decision will be supported by the latest and most accurate information available. The presumption should be in favour of keeping the school open unless, in the Headteacher's view, to do so would put the health, safety or welfare of pupils and/or staff at risk. In reaching this decision, the Headteacher & Deputy Head will take full account of local circumstances and, in particular, the following considerations:

(a) Both short and longer term weather information: Further information on this will be sought from the Local Authority website and BBC local weather updates. Attention should be paid to ascertaining what would be a safe and appropriate time to send pupils and staff home.

(b) Advice regarding local transport and the safety of local roads:
Whether buses and trains are running, and whether it is safe to drive on local roads

(c) Arrangements for pupil safety: The absolute priority is to ensure that provision is made for each and every child. Where children cannot be collected immediately, they will be kept at school and supervised until collection can take place.

(d) Whether the school is accessible, and has working heating/electrics/water.

The closure or opening of other schools in the proximity will not be the key factor in such taking decisions, although this may be taken into account. It is the responsibility of all teachers to make every effort to attend for duty.

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.

2. 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 School website and Facebook are important information channels 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 website, leaving an appropriate message on the school answerphone, and emailing/texting parents and staff.

3. Closure during the school day

Emergency Contacts

Safe and speedy dismissal of pupils in the event of an emergency closure depends on the school and parents working in partnership.

Parents should provide the school with any specific instructions in respect of their child should the school require to close during the day. Parents are required to give the school an emergency contact.

Precautions

It may be that a parent who collects his/her children offers to give shelter to other children. The agreement of the parents of these children should be sought before releasing pupils in this way.

Provision of adequate supervision by members of teaching staff should be made for those pupils who cannot go home immediately and have therefore to remain at school.

Last reviewed: September 2020

Next review: September 2021

Headteacher and Proprietor

Mrs Christine Redgrave

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