

Mount Street Junior School



INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Chair of Governors:

Date:

Headteacher:

Date:

Date for Review: 10 July 2018

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council Inclement Weather Policy for Schools

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Cyngor Sir Powys County Council Inclement Weather Policy for Schools

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This document clarifies Powys County Council's policy in relation to the impact on schools and the requirement for employees to attend work during severe or inclement weather. Its purpose is to:
- ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and employees should a school have to deal with severe, inclement weather; and
 - ensure that all employees are clear about their roles and responsibilities in the event of severe weather.

2. Definition

- 2.1 Inclement weather can be defined as snow, ice, fog and floods, which render journeys extremely hazardous.
- 2.2 'Extremely hazardous' includes those conditions in which the police and/or appropriate motoring organisations advise people not to make unnecessary journeys (which do not include travelling to work) or indeed travel at all.

3. General

- 3.1 The decision to close a school should not be taken lightly. The responsibility for deciding to close a school because of severe inclement weather lies with the Headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, as the Headteacher must make the decision in the light of local circumstances. The safety of individual employees who may need to travel further than pupils should also be considered when decisions are made.
- 3.2 This policy aims to maintain a service to parents and pupils for as long as is reasonably practical and that a partial closure of a school should be considered before complete closure.
- 3.3 The interest and safety of children and employees are paramount under these circumstances. Allowing children to walk home unsupervised in potentially difficult or dangerous conditions or to return to an empty house may not be in their best interests. The age of the child in question must be taken into consideration when a decision is made.
- 3.4 Employees should only be allowed to go home early if there is a genuine need on the basis of their personal safety, but decisions must be made on an individual basis.

4. Considerations - Pupils

- 4.1 Headteachers must comply with any request from a transport provider that wishes to transport certain pupils early as the operators may be responding to meteorological warnings. However this does not mean that all pupils should be sent home early.
- 4.2 It may be the case that only those pupils travelling by bus, or those living in rural areas, need to be sent home early. There may be no safety benefits in sending home early those individuals who walk. Indeed, this may cause further problems

and may impact on other services if parents need to leave their place of work early in order to look after their children.

- 4.3 Every reasonable effort should be made to contact parents to inform them of the school's closure and to ensure the safety of pupils after they leave the school. Headteachers should consider whether it is preferable to keep children at school until they are collected. Parents should be informed in advance of the school's procedures in the event of inclement weather, and advised to listen to various radio stations, listed in 6.3, for announcements about closures and requests to collect pupils.

5. Considerations - Employees

- 5.1 It is essential that employees who are going to be late or are unable to attend work, telephone the Headteacher as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than fifteen minutes before the start of the school day. Clearly there may be times when this is not possible and allowances will be given in circumstances when there is no access to a telephone. However contact must be made as soon as reasonably practicable in such instances.
- 5.2 All employees are advised that, in circumstances where they are unable to attend their normal place of work either because the school has been closed to pupils and staff by the Headteacher, or they are unable to travel to their normal place of work then they are **not** to attend their nearest school. The employee would be expected to undertake home-based development work.
- 5.3 If the school has been closed by the Headteacher, **all** employees will be paid at their normal daily rate. This will include supply teachers who have attended the school, to find that the decision to close has been taken.
- 5.4 Any decision regarding leaving the school early must be made in consultation with the Headteacher.
- 5.5 If pupils are sent home early due to hazardous driving conditions, consideration to employees who travel to work by car should also be taken by the Headteacher and sent home if appropriate.
- 5.6 In the event that the school remains closed and the weather conditions do not improve, resulting in absence of more than one day, employees should maintain regular contact with the Headteacher.

6. Procedure for Schools

- 6.1 Once the decision to close the school has been made following discussion with the Chair of Governors, the Headteacher must contact the Powys Careline (0845 0544847) if the decision is made before 8.30am, in order to inform officers that the school will be closing.
- 6.2 To ensure the schools that are closing are named at the 8am news bulletin the Headteacher must have informed the Powys Careline (0845 0544847) by 7.40am, at which time the closure list will be sent to the media.
- 6.3 The closure list will be sent to:

BBC Radio Wales/ Radio Cymru
BBC Shropshire
Valleys Radio
Wyvern FM
Beacon FM
Classic Hits
Radio Ceredigion

BBC Hereford & Worcester
96.4FM The Wave
Swansea Sound
Sunshine 855
Classic Gold
Radio Maldwyn
Red Dragon Radio

- 6.4 After 8.30am, schools should contact the Communications Unit (01597 826377), whose officers will continue to update the media at regular intervals. If there are staffing difficulties at the Communications Unit and they are unable to attend the office, continue to contact Powys Careline
- 6.5 The Communications Unit will provide the Head of Schools and Inclusion a list of schools that are closed due to inclement weather and keep this list regularly updated.
- 6.6 Schools should not contact the media directly.
- 6.7 Schools are asked to encourage parents to contact the school directly, not the Authority or media, to ascertain whether a school is closed or not.
- 6.8 Wherever possible the schools should publish the closure of the school on its own website and encourage parents to access the site for information.
- 6.9 Once the decision to close a school has been taken, the Headteacher must also notify other interested parties, including transportation and catering providers, of the decision.
- 6.10 Reference should be made to the School Transport Policy document and other relevant documentation if the decision to close a school due to inclement weather is taken.

