



If you can dream it...
Ysgol Bae Baglan

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Severe Weather

Protocol Policy

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date passed by Governing Body: Nov 15th 2017

Chairman.....

E.V. Latham

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

Emergency Closure of schools due to severe weather

This guidance, in conjunction with the document 'Managing Crisis in Schools and Educational Settings' and guidance from Welsh Government, offers advice in relation to the impact of severe weather conditions. However, it is essential that Headteachers and Governing Bodies determine their own procedures within this framework in order to:

- ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils and staff should a school have to deal with severe inclement weather;
- ensure that all employees are clear about their roles and responsibilities in the event of severe weather.

The following principles should underpin all procedures:

- a service to parents and pupils should be maintained for as long as is reasonably practical;
- partial closure of a school should be considered before complete closure;
- the interests and safety of children is paramount. Allowing children to walk home unsupervised in potentially dangerous conditions, or them returning home to an empty house, may not be in their best interests;
- staff 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.

Considerations

1. The decision to close a school should not be taken lightly. The responsibility for deciding to close a school because of severe weather lies with the Headteacher. The Headteacher must make the decision in the light of local circumstances. The safety of individual staff who may need to travel further distances than pupils should also be considered when decisions are made.
2. The Headteacher must inform the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the decision to close the school.

3. **Headteachers must inform the Local Authority as soon as a decision to close the school has been made - It is essential that all communication is directed to the School and Family Support Team**, in order for the authority to gain a clear and uniform appraisal of the situation across the county. The School and Family Support Team will populate the Neath Port Talbot internet 'Emergency School Closures' page as soon as information is received from Headteachers, in addition to contacting and informing all relevant personnel within the authority. The headteacher may wish to inform the local and national media of the school closure.

The Contact Person for Local Authority in such circumstances is: John Burge Tel: 07980926009 (mobile)

Email: j.burge@npt.gov.uk

****Head teachers are asked to text or email rather than phone****

4. Where schools are dependent on school transport then Headteachers are also required to inform the Passenger Transport section in Environment at the earliest opportunity.

The Contact for School Transport in such circumstances is:

**Peter Jackson, Manager Integrated Transport Unit
and his team on**

Tel: 01639 686657 / 686939 / 686093 / 686658 (office)

Email: passengertransport@npt.gov.uk

Headteachers must comply with any request from a transport provider that they wish to transport certain pupils early as the operators may be responding to meteorological warnings. This does not necessarily mean, however, that all pupils should be sent home early.

5. Where a transport contractor or provider is unable to provide transport in the morning because of severe weather conditions, no contract transport will be provided in the afternoon. Parents who are able to convey their children to school in the morning in lieu of the normal transport arrangements should be advised that they must assume responsibility for transporting their children home in the afternoon as no contract transport will be available.
6. Children have an entitlement to 190 days schooling annually and may also have an entitlement to a free midday meal. Headteachers should consider alternatives to closure before sending all pupils home, this is particularly so for schools where many of the pupils live in the same town as the school.
7. It may be the case that only those pupils travelling by bus, or those living in rural areas and areas more seriously affected by adverse weather, need be sent home early or, in the event of staff absence, those pupils whose parents can collect them. There may be no safety benefits in sending home early those pupils 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.
8. 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 severe weather and advised to access the Neath Port Talbot web site and / or listen to local radio stations for announcements about closures and requests to collect pupils.
9. Head teachers are required to submit to the Authority, via the School and Family Support Team, a completed Risk Assessment within 5 working days of the school reopening.