

ALDER COPPICE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Achievement through Commitment

Emergency Closure Policy

| Policy for the Attention of | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Audience</i> | <i>Key Audience</i> | <i>Optional Audience</i> | <i>Additional/Notes</i> |
| Senior Leadership Team | ✓ | | |
| Teachers | ✓ | | |
| Teaching Assistants | ✓ | | |
| Administrative Staff | ✓ | | |
| Curriculum Support | ✓ | | |
| Lunchtime Supervisors | ✓ | | |
| Site Manager | ✓ | | |
| Cleaners | ✓ | | |
| Governors | ✓ | | |
| Parents | ✓ | | |
| Website | ✓ | | |
| Local Authority | | | |

Policy Updated – Autumn 2022 ~ Review Date – Autumn 2025

Introduction

It may be necessary to close the School for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:

- Severe weather including snow, flooding or storms;
- Accommodation problems e.g. loss of power supply, heating failures or fire damage.

Wherever possible we will endeavour to keep the School open.

Assessing Risk

Factors involved in reaching the decision to close the School are likely to be:

- Access to School i.e. road conditions;
- Breakdown of essential services (e.g. heating, electrical services, water);
- Location of staff in relation to travelling to School.
- Health and Safety implications of the above.

Snow

By its nature, snow is unpredictable and decisions about whether to close the School in the event of snowfall need to be made quickly, based on an objective assessment of risk. There are three areas of potential risk which need to be assessed:

Can children, parents and staff safely access the School from Northway?

Given the position of the School, this is the over-riding factor.

Is it safe for children and staff to move about the School site?

As a minimum there needs to be accessible, safe pathways cleared as follows:

- Main entrance gate to main entrance (Lower School building)
- Main entrance gate and steps or KS2 playground gate and playground to Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 entrances (Upper School building)
- Main entrance to hall door (Lower School building)

The Site Manager is responsible for snow clearance and the clearing of approach paths within the School site. When severe weather is forecast the Site Manager will use salt/grit as appropriate.

The clearance of public roads/pathways is the responsibility of the Highways Department.

When the School is open during inclement weather the Headteacher will carry out a risk assessment with regard to daily routines which means that some aspects of the School day may be altered – for example children may not be allowed out onto the playgrounds at daytime and lunchtime if the areas are considered to be unsafe.

Is it safe for the large majority of staff to come to work?

It may be possible to run the School on a reduced staff. However, if a significant number of staff cannot get through safely, it may not be possible to maintain appropriate ratios of staff to children and therefore for health and safety reasons it would not be possible to open the School.

Decision to Close

A decision will be made as early as possible and usually by 6.30am. The decision will be made jointly by the Headteacher/Site Manager and wherever possible the Chair of Governors will be contacted. In the event that the Chair of Governors is not available agreement has been given that the decision rests with the Headteacher.

Notification of Emergency Closure

| Action | Responsibility |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Contacting members of staff | Emergency Contact Routine |
| Text message sent to parents | Mrs Barwell |
| Website Message | Mrs Linney |
| Radio Stations contacted (Beacon, Heart & Galaxy) | Mrs Barwell |
| Dudley Local Authority | Mrs Linney |

Parents will be able to find out if the School is closed via a text message sent to them, telephoning the School, checking the portal/website or listening to the radio.

Wherever possible a member of the School Office/member of teaching staff who lives close by will come in to the School Office first thing to cover the initial period of closure.

During the School Day Closure

On rare occasions it may be necessary for the School to have to close during the School day i.e. if the weather is deteriorating. Parents would be contacted and given the option to collect their child early. On severe weather days parents may contact the School and the Headteacher may sanction children being released early to a known parent/guardian. In all cases the School would remain operational with an appropriate ratio of staff until all children had been collected/left.

Staff Attendance

Although it is recognised that severe weather conditions make it difficult for staff to get to and from work, unless advised from the Headteacher, via the Emergency Contact Routines, then the expectation is that staff will present themselves for work.

A decision to close the School is never taken lightly, and consideration is given to the implications for parents, in particular for those who work and with regard to looking after children during the day, and wherever possible we will endeavour to keep the School open. However the overriding factor will always be the health and safety consideration for all stakeholders.