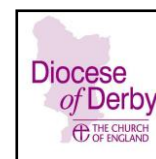


Langley Mill Church of England (Controlled) Infant School and Nursery



SCHOOL CLOSURE POLICY

This policy has been impact assessed in the light of all other school policies and the Equality Act 2010.

Written / Reviewed by	Date	Approved by GB	Minute Number	Next Review Date
Aldercar Family of schools	January 2013	26/06/2013	GB/2013/45	September 2014
S. Rivington	October 2014	03/12/2014	GB/2014/87	September 2015
S. Rivington	September 2015	30/09/2015	GB/2015/71	September 2016
S. Rivington	September 2016	21/09/2016	GB/2016/68	September 2017
S. Rivington	October 2017	17/11/2017	RMC/2017/18	October 2018
K. Scrivens	October 2018	5/12/18	GB/2018/84	October 2019
K. Scrivens	September 2019	24/09/2019	GB/2019/71	September 2020
K. Scrivens	November 2020	01/12/2020	GB/202064	September 2021
K. Scrivens	September 2021	21/09/2021	GB/2022/65	September 2022

Langley Mill Church of England Infant School and Nursery

School Closure Policy

Introduction

Some local authorities have policies in which a central decision is made by the local authority about the closure of schools in its area. However, in Derbyshire Local Authority, the decision is left to individual schools. This policy outlines actions to be taken when there are conditions that may affect the opening of our schools.

Schools may be unable to open for a variety of reasons, including:

- Inaccessibility of roads and/or the site;
- Accommodation problems such as loss of power supply, heating failure, vandalism or fire damage; frozen or burst pipes;
- Severe weather including snow, flooding or storms;
- Disruption to transport, for example fuel shortages;
- Infectious sickness/disease.

School will endeavour to remain open wherever possible. These guidelines have been created to provide advice in the event that the school is unable to operate due to unforeseen circumstances.

School closure

The decision to close the school will normally rest with the Headteacher and in her absence the next most senior member of staff, and be confirmed by the Chair of Governors or in their absence the Vice Chair. The decision should wherever possible be made before 7:30am on the basis of information received from sources such as the Met Office or utility suppliers, and supplemented by on the spot observation from staff best placed to make such observation such as the caretaker. If a decision is made to close the school, this should be deemed an unavoidable closure. The LA will be informed of any proposed closure. In an emergency this may not be possible and they will be informed as soon as possible of any action taken.

Factors involved in reaching the decision to close the school, or part of the school, may include:

- Advice from the police and other agencies about travel conditions;
- Access to and movement and safety of the school site;
- Failure or loss of facilities on site (e.g. heating, electrical, water etc);
- Availability of staff / supervision of pupils (e.g. staff shortage);
- Ability to provide a midday meal;
- Emergency / critical incident;
- Advice from the Health Protection Agency;
- Advice from the Local Authority, as appropriate.

During the day closure

If it becomes evident that it is necessary to close the school during the school day for example, if the weather is deteriorating, the school needs to ensure that children are collected from school as soon as possible. This will be achieved through the teachers2parents text messaging service and LA broadcasting site. No pupil will be allowed to leave school without an identified adult. It may be that a parent/carer who collects his/her children offers to give shelter to other children. The agreement of the parents/carers of these children must be given to staff before pupils are released in this way. School will ensure that adequate supervision by members of staff will be

made for those pupils who cannot go home or to their destination immediately and therefore have to remain at school.

Clearance of snow

Within the school site the school is responsible for clearing snow and ice and the clearing of paths is the specific task of the caretaker. When severe weather is forecast the caretaker should ensure that salt/grit is laid in preparation. If there is any question of children's safety being at risk then they should remain indoors.

Recording of Pupil Absence

Guidance on how to record pupil absence is available at:

<http://education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a0010012/school-attendance>

In summary, if the school closes completely, all pupils should be marked code "Y" – "forced and partial closure". Code "Y", does not count as absence in the statistics. If the school remains open, the only exception to this will be for pupils who are not within walking distance of the school, and who get to school by transport provided by the school or Local Authority, and where that transport is not available because of adverse weather conditions. If the school is partially closed the above Code "Y" should be used for pupils.

All other children should be expected to attend and should be marked as present or absent as normal. Department for Education (DfE) advise that Headteacher's should determine whether a child's absence should be recorded as authorised or unauthorised during very severe weather conditions. If the Headteacher is satisfied that the reason a child could not get to school was because of the adverse weather, then that absence should be authorised; if the Headteacher judges the child could have made it to school, then that absence should be unauthorised. DfE advise that the key indicator is persistent absence and that short periods of adverse weather are not likely to impact upon this. OFSTED inspectors look at trends over time and take into account incidents of adverse weather

Staff Attendance

Where, having considered all of the above, the Headteacher and Governing Body make the decision that the weather conditions (or other) are such that it is not appropriate to open the school for pupils, then there should be no reason why the school should then expect staff to come into school. If the conditions are unacceptable or dangerous for pupils, then the same considerations apply to staff. Staff will be granted time off with pay but the school expects that if the school is closed, staff will use the time to undertake appropriate work-related activities at home. For those schools using the council's payroll services, no action is required. It should be made clear that teachers will, as always, act professionally to do everything they can during lessons to ensure that pupils cover all the work that they need to do and may have missed during the closure.

Staff should be notified of a school closure at the earliest opportunity. At our schools, the Governing Bodies have ensured all staff can be contacted in these circumstances through the teachers2parents text messaging service and LA broadcasting site.

The Headteacher will make every attempt to notify any other visitors expected at the school on that day e.g. health workers, authority staff, contractors, are notified of the closure. Visitors may be subject to the decisions of their own employers regarding work during inclement weather and are expected to notify schools if they will not be attending a planned appointment. If a visitor you were expecting does not attend, you should make attempts to contact them or, where this is not possible, notify their employer in order that their safety can be ascertained.

If the school is open as usual, staff should make all reasonable efforts to get into work. This means assessing the availability of public transport or, if they normally drive to work and are unable to do so, considering the feasibility of walking to work if they live relatively close and are fit and able to do so. There should be no expectation that teachers will walk miles in severe conditions to get to work. If there are severe weather warnings in the area in which they live and the police and other agencies are advising people not to travel, teachers affected will need to contact their Headteacher to discuss the situation.

Records

The Headteacher should ensure that records are kept of absences due to inclement weather, how much time was missed and how the absence was accounted for. The Local Authority may ask for this information for reporting purposes.

In the event of school being closed:

If the school is closed the Headteacher will try to ensure that the following events take place:

- The decision is ratified with the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors;
- The information is transmitted to the LA at the earliest opportunity;
- If possible a member of staff is available at the morning start time to deal with any pupils who arrive at school unescorted until parents, carers or emergency contact can collect them;
- Informing parents/carers (i.e. text/LA site).

These tasks do not all have to be completed by the Headteacher, although they have the overall responsibility for ensuring that each has been carried out.