



**Highcliffe School**



# Emergency Procedures

(School Closure Arrangements)

Update December 2019



## Emergency Procedures – School Closure Arrangements

The following notes are intended to provide guidance in the event of severe weather conditions or another unexpected need to close the school.

The interpretation of the detail of these notes will inevitably depend on the circumstances at the time of implementation.

In the event of an emergency, all employees will be expected to react in such a way as to protect the welfare and safety of students, colleagues and themselves.

- The decision to close the school will be made by the Headteacher in conjunction with other senior staff. Health and Safety will be the paramount consideration. A partial closure maybe an option but the exact structure of this will be part of any staff or parental communication.
- This decision will follow a risk assessment of the situation should the school remain open.
- Before making a decision to close the school consideration will be given to:
  - the level of disruption to students' learning
  - disruption to programmes of study
  - support for students with Particular Needs
  - impact on assessment procedures
  - scheduled public examinations
  - impact on controlled coursework arrangements
  - any planned school activities
  - extra-curricular activities
  - school trips and visits scheduled
  - calendared events such as parents' meetings
  - multi-agency support meetings
  - any outstanding safeguarding arrangements
  - external contracting work
  - INSET arrangements
  - LA and DCSF reviews and monitoring visits
- In the event of snowfall, points to be considered will include
  - the safety of students travelling to and from country areas by bus
  - having substantial numbers of parents bringing their vehicles into a compact residential area, which may have untreated roads in order to drop students off.
  - the increased danger to student cyclists travelling on uncleared roads
  - the possible lack of adult supervision on site until those that are delayed can attend
  - the extent to which pathways can be cleared and rendered safe between buildings
  - the likelihood of internal corridors becoming dangerous due to snow and melt-water being trodden into the building
  - the probable disruption to curriculum delivery caused by both accommodation and staffing difficulties
  - the difficulty associated with keeping students safe and away from such activities as snowballing



- In the event of a closure or bad weather the following arrangements and liaison will have to be made by SLT:-
  - Transport – buses, minibuses and taxis – S Fuller
  - Risk Assessment for trips and fixtures - in conjunction with activity leader – N O'Connor
  - Cover arrangements (Supply cancelling etc) – Beth Reid/Heather Bootman via N O'Connor
  - Caterers and Cleaning Contractors – S Fuller
  - Site safety, Snow and ice clearing and footpath safety – Site Caretaking Team with S Fuller
  - Telephone answering machine message – H Glyde
  - School Website message – H Glyde
  - Notification of closure to local radio stations via Dorset GIS website – M Downs
  - Group Call Notification to Staff – M Downs
  - Group Call Notification to Parents – M Downs

### Closure of the school before the start of the day

- In the event of severe weather warnings from the Meteorological Office or poor weather conditions in the school and New Forest areas, the Site Manager and Deputy Headteacher will contact the Headteacher early in the morning to discuss the situation (See Appendix B for DofE guidance).
- The Headteacher will agree what action to take and inform SLT. This will be based on four criteria:
  1. Number of staff able to make it into the school and therefore levels of supervision
  2. Other Schools' decisions
  3. Safety of site and transport for students
  4. Safety of site for staff (if students aren't in)
- Staff will receive initial notification via a Group Text but the SLT will follow up by notifying team leaders of the closure and request that they cascade this information through their teams (Colleagues are asked to share contact telephone details with one another)
  - SLT – P Earnshaw
  - SEN & TA's/Geography – D Prodomo
  - Administrative, Churchill's Contractors, Catering Staff – A Parson/S Fuller
  - Site team – S Fuller
  - Sixth Form/History/EPD – L Swan
  - English/Mathematics/MFL/PE/ICT – M Downs
  - Science/Dance/Drama/Technology/Art/Music – N O'Connor
  - 
  - Pastoral Team – M Yapp
  - External Contractors – M Kelly and S Fuller
  - Invigilators – N Lill via M Downs

Please note it is the SLT and Curriculum leads responsibility to have the correct contact details.

Curriculum Leaders will then need to contact their team members.



- The same arrangements will apply for informing staff of the re-opening of the school and the school email system will also act as a main method of communication with staff and this should be checked throughout the day.
- Where possible Group Call Text will be used to notify staff but this is a secondary system. Staff are encouraged to make sure Exams and Data have the correct mobile telephone number.
- Staff will be expected to report for duty in the normal way, provided that it is safe to do so. In the event that it is not practical or reasonable to make the journey to school, staff should use their professional judgement and engage in an appropriate programme of work off site as agreed with team leaders. If staff live within reasonable walking distance (Mundeford, Walkford, Highcliffe, etc) then they will be requested to help within school to organise the close down and deal with students that may arrive.
- Once on site the cooperation of all staff will be essential to ensure that any students who have attended school are safe and well.
  - Maintenance of calm behaviour will be essential
  - Snowballing and sliding on icy surfaces will not be allowed
  - Snow must not be brought in to the building
- Students should gather in the school hall. Arrangements will then be made to return them home. If this is impractical, a programme will be produced for the day.
- Parents will be informed that the school is closed via the Dorset Emergency Closure procedures (See Appendix A). A message will also be posted on the school website, Group Call Text sent and the school telephone answering machine if this is possible.
- Where trips, visits and fixtures have been arranged, the party leader will, in conjunction with N O'Connor and the Headteacher, make a risk assessment and decide what steps to take. This decision will be circulated to relevant parents and the Student Support Office and Reception
- Internal examinations may have to be postponed and rearranged. External examinations would take place provided that it was appropriate to continue. The Examination Officer would take advice from the Examining Board on the day.
- The Director of Business and Finance will inform the caterers, cleaning company, lunchtime supervisors etc and where appropriate allocate alternative roles for the day.

### Additional information in the event of an early closure

- In the event of an emergency or deterioration in weather conditions during the day, it may be necessary to close the school early. In this case many of the above points will apply and be enacted upon. Staff will be informed of the arrangements in a written message and by email at the time.



- Provided that normal transport can be secured early, students would return home in the usual way.
  - If there was no one at home they would be instructed to go to the chosen friend's house and to make sure that their parents were aware of their location.
  - The school telephones would be made available for this purpose.
  - They would be instructed to take appropriate materials with them for home study.
  
- Students who could not safely be transported home would be gathered in the School Hall where the Headteacher or Deputy would assess the situation, produce a register of students and allocate staff supervision and rooms to the remaining students.

*This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (including Child Protection). All our practice and activities must be consistent and in line with the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures noted above. Any deviations from these policies and procedures should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher so that the matter can be addressed.*

SFR  
December 2019



## Appendix A – Dorset Emergency Closure Procedure (as issued 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017)

These are instructions for using the school closure pages on Dorset For You and DfE guidance regarding Emergencies and severe weather: schools and early years settings (25 March 2014)

### **Instructions for 'closing' and 'reopening' your school on the Dorset County Council GIS system**

1. Follow this URL to access the login page  
<http://mapping.dorsetforyou.com/closedservices/admin> (you can do this on any device with internet access including PC's and mobile phones).
2. Enter your username and password and click on the login button or hit 'enter'.
3. You will be presented with a list of services that you can edit – for headteachers this will just show schools.
4. When you click on 'schools' you will be presented with the name of your school.
5. If your school is open the green box alongside it will be selected. If you select the 'closed' box this will show your school as being closed. If you select 'partially closed' this will show your school as being partially closed. The school closure or partial closure will then be displayed on dorsetforyou.com. Ideally you should do this by 6.30am.
6. At 4 p.m. all closed schools will default back to open. If the school is closed on subsequent days you will need to CLOSE it again.
7. You can check the correct status is shown by logging out and going to <http://mapping.dorsetforyou.com/closedservices>.

### **Notifying the local media, particularly radio stations**

1. Schools will NO LONGER be required to notify local radio stations themselves.
2. Dorset County Council's communications unit will notify the local media that the process has now changed and that they will find the DEFINITIVE list of closures on dorsetforyou.com.
3. You should notify parents that radio stations will still carry information about closures but that they can also access the information on <http://mapping.dorsetforyou.com/closedservices>.

### **Forgotten username**

If you have forgotten your username you can also use your registered username address to login. This is normally your 'office@' email address.

### **Forgotten password**

If you have forgotten your password follow the 'Forgotten your Password' link on the login form. This will then send a new password to the registered e-mail.

### **Contact information**

For questions about the GIS system, please call: 01305 224861 (07967 504716 in emergencies only).



## Highcliffe School

For other queries regarding the school closure process please email:  
[schoolscourses@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:schoolscourses@dorsetcc.gov.uk) or phone **01305 224995**

(Last updated: October 2017 )



## Appendix B – DofE Guidance

### **Emergencies and severe weather: schools and early years settings (25 March 2014)**

During severe weather conditions, such as flooding or snow, you should keep your school or early years setting open for as many children as possible.

However, it might be necessary to close temporarily due to inaccessibility or risk of injury. You should do all you can to reopen as soon as possible.

If flooding has significantly affected your school or early years setting, you should [contact our incident alert team](#).

If you're an early years provider and have had to move to temporary premises, you should check to see if you need to [register with Ofsted](#) at your new premises.

#### **School attendance statistics**

Where children are unable to get to school due to severe weather conditions, you can mark them in the register using absence code 'Y'. This means that their absence won't affect your school's attendance figures.

However, if you believe that a child could have got to school, their absence should be recorded as unauthorised using code 'O'.

#### **Staff absence**

If some of your teachers can't get to work, you should be flexible by, for example:

- bringing together groups and classes with teachers and support staff working together
- using other school staff or volunteers to provide cover supervision or oversee alternative activities
- re-arranging the curriculum

Reception and other infant classes (children aged 5, 6 or 7) should normally be groups of 30 or fewer, but having more than 30 in one class due to temporary exceptional circumstances is not a reason to close the school or the class.