



THE TOWERS

Emergency Closure procedure

Date Approved:	2012
Ownership:	Headmistress
Last Review:	March 2016
Next Review:	September 2019

Principle

This policy intends to support the school's aims as outlined in the Mission Statement.

"As a Gospel centred community, we aim to:

- ✓ build a loving environment where pupils will be enabled to grow in the knowledge and love of God and of each other;
- ✓ value each individual equally;
- ✓ enable all to flourish and develop their own talents; and teach
- ✓ individuals to value the unique gifts of those around them."

SEMPER FIDELIS - Always Faithful.

The closure of one part or all of the school is a rare event, though the recent harshening of winter conditions has caused disruption to our services, most notably the coach transport system. It is important that we anticipate the possibility that the school will need to close due to adverse weather conditions, possible potential causes of closure include, but are not restricted to:

- ✓ fire damage or flooding or snow or ice
- ✓ high levels of sickness among staff or children or flu
- ✓ pandemic no heating or water in our buildings a
- ✓ bereavement an act of terrorism
- ✓

These notes are to provide guidance for school staff and families whose children attend the school. Ultimately, however, it is for parents to decide if children should leave home for school in bad weather even if the school is to open. If you are not going to be home during the day your children should know where they should go, and whom to contact, if the school is required to close.

Place of Safety

The school will remain a place of safety for those children who arrive at school and have no way of going home.

The main criteria for closing the school are:

The Health and Safety risks incurred by:

- ✓ Expecting staff and pupils to travel to school or stay at school.
- ✓ The inability of the school to function due to significant travel disruption or other reasons consistent with the headline cause. We could be directed to close the school by the Health Authority because of pandemic for example.

Closing the School before Normal Session Time

Once again it is important for us to make an early announcement as soon as possible in order to minimise any potential travel risk. The school is be mindful that many staff travel a considerable distance to school each day and that many pupils live in small towns and villages, where the roads can be very dangerous due to low levels of gritting and snow clearance.

The Headmistress will therefore make an early assessment of any poor weather situation, in consultation with the Bursar and ensure the appropriate channels are utilised in order that all of the schools' community is informed.

Channels of Information

- As soon as a decision has been made; the school's website will be
 - ✓ updated parents/carers will be communicated via Firefly and
 - ✓ schoolcomms.
 - ✓ The answer machine facility will also be updated with the latest information to inform callers of the situation.

Parents and staff should check the website regularly and school social media channels will also be used to disseminate information:

These same channels of communication will be used to inform staff pupils/parents when the school will be re-opening. Staff and parents should check these channels regularly.

Further procedures may be introduced should closure become a regular threat.

Closing the school during the school day

Closing the school once it is in session can be more problematical. However, our aim always is to ensure pupils arrive home safely and there will be a parent or carer available to receive them. It will be a judgement call in assessing the two areas of risk – keeping them in school and being certain they will be able to get home safely – especially if travelling by bus – or sending them home to a potentially empty residence.

The more practical issue will be ensuring buses are available to take pupils home safely at an earlier than contracted time. Consequently, in conjunction with our minibus drivers and monitoring of

local weather conditions, we will communicate our decision via the information channels previously mentioned.

Where necessary we will provide every opportunity for pupils to make contact with their parents or carers so that they are informed of our decision. In the case of younger children, we will make direct contact with their parents or carers.

Pupils will be expected to complete the work provided by staff during the time that the school is closed. Work will be accessible via Firefly.