



# **Rowlands Gill Primary School**

## **Policy for Emergency School Closure**

**Date: November 2016**

**Ratified by Governors: November 2016**

**Review Date: November 2018**





## **1.Introduction**

It may be necessary to close school for a variety of reasons including:

- Severe weather including snow, flooding or storms
- Disruption to transport, for example through petrol or diesel shortages
- Accommodation problems, for example loss of power supply, heating failures or fire damage
- Strike action (lack of staff to supervise the pupils).

School should, however, endeavour to remain open wherever possible. School contingency plans should be passed on to staff, parents and pupils.

## **2. Closure due to severe weather**

The decision to close a school will normally rest with the Headteacher or in her absence the Assistant Headteacher and be confirmed with the Chair of Governors or if he is unavailable the Vice Chair.

The decision should be made wherever possible at 7.00 am **(or as soon as possible after that time)** and on the basis of information received from the media about weather, supplemented by on the spot observation, either personally or from staff members better placed to make such observations and through appropriate external agencies such as the Met Office.

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

- Access to the school, i.e. road conditions (obstructions, snow, ice, flooding etc).
- Lack of supervision for children i.e. staff not attending school (staff must contact the HT if they are unable to attend school or be late)
- Breakdown of school essential services (heating, electrical services, water, storm damage etc).

The Headteacher will advise staff, Governors and parents through the following;

by text message (staff member responsible - Mrs K. Hodgson- Business Manager).

by the schools website ([www.rowlandsgillprimary.org](http://www.rowlandsgillprimary.org)) (staff member responsible - Mrs N Kehoe)



by local radio stations (Newcastle/Metro Radio) . Monitor their websites as details of any closures will be published:

- <http://www.metroradio.co.uk/schools> (staff member responsible – Miss H Martin)

The above tasks can be sent to parents and staff off site by a member of staff if the school is not accessible to staff.

If the school is faced with severe weather, flooding, disruption to transport etc and the school **remains open**, parents, staff and Governors will be informed by the tasks detailed above.

The whole school community, including the After School Clubs, should be made regularly aware of this procedure as incidents can occur with little or no warning.

Mrs K Hodgson has a list of contact details for all stakeholders so they can be informed of school closures by text message.

### **3. During School Day Closure Guidance**

On occasions it may be necessary for school to close during the school day i.e. if the weather is deteriorating and there is doubt as to whether children can be returned home later in the day. In such cases schools need to ensure that children are collected by parents/carers as soon as possible. On no account must pupils be sent home with another parent/carer without the parents' consent.

### **4. Staff attendance**

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

Contract Staff (Catering and Cleaning Services) also need to be advised of any emergency requirements.

### **5. Clearance of Snow**

Within the school site, the school is responsible for snow clearance and the clearing of approach paths is the specific task of the caretaker. When severe weather is forecast, the caretaker should be tasked to lay salt and grit on arrival.

**The clearance of public roads is the responsibility of the Highways Department.**



If there is any question of children's safety being at risk, for instance if they are let out at break time and the playground area is unsafe, school has a responsibility in inclement weather to keep the children indoors.

### **6. In the Event of School Being Closed**

If school is closed it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that the following events happen

- The decision is ratified with the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors
- The school website is updated
- The text message is sent to all staff and parents about school closure
- The information is passed to relevant media agencies as soon as possible
- School is appropriately staffed by teachers/teaching assistants and Governors to deal with any pupils who arrive at school unescorted until parents or emergency contacts can collect the pupils.
- Inform the LA of school closure (LA informs the taxi service for SEN children).

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