



Severe Weather Guidance

(Nov 2016)

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Decision to close the school.....	1
3. Communicating the school closure	2
4. Other actions.....	2
5. Arrangements and pay for staff	3
Appendix 1 – Severe Weather Information for Parents	4

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In times of severe weather, schools within the Bath & Wells Multi Academy Trust should make every effort to remain open whenever possible.
- 1.2 On rare occasions the weather can be so severe that getting to and from school becomes hazardous. Really bad weather can also be disruptive and can cause anxiety and stress, therefore this document aims to give guidance on when it is appropriate to close a school due to bad weather and the steps to take to minimise disruption and anxiety.

2. Decision to close the school

- 2.1 The decision to close the school either before or during the school day will be made by the Headteacher of the school in consultation with the Director of Learning & Achievement or CEO. The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:
 1. Insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely
 2. Conditions on site are dangerous

3. Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous for travel.
- 2.2 In making the decision to close the school careful consideration should be given to the health, safety and welfare of both pupils and staff; the effects on the safety of pupils and staff journeys to and from the school and whether there is likely to be enough staff for a safe teacher-pupil ratio to operate the school, giving consideration to pupils specific needs.

3. Communicating the school closure

- 3.1 If the school is to close the Headteacher will be responsible for communicating this to parents and carers by:
 - a) updating the Local Authority's website
 - b) activating the schools 'phone tree' or text alert service. Each school should have their own emergency contact scheme in place for these instances.
 - c) e-mailing Jason.brown@bathwellsmat.org. and by phoning on 01749 372700. This information will be displayed to the public on the 'Home' page of the MAT website. <http://www.bathwellsmat.org/>
- 3.2 Each school should make all practical efforts to keep parents informed as to the situation at the school during adverse weather conditions, as such conditions and the uncertainty places very considerable difficulties upon parents. However parents are expected to check websites and listen to radio broadcasts.

4. Other actions

- 4.1 Where the school is officially closed, all pupils absence is counted as authorised absence.
- 4.2 In the event of the school having to close during the day due to unforeseen worsening weather or similar unforeseen circumstances, parents will be contacted by phone either at home or work and asked to collect their child/ren. Such an early release will only be contemplated in very extreme circumstances.
- 4.3 In the event of snow some pathways will be need to cleared and salted. Parents, children and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. Children should also be reminded of this in assembly. Essential pathways will need to be maintained as clear as possible throughout the day.
- 4.4 Before and after school opening hours parents are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide on the school playground.
- 4.5 During adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out of bounds to parents and children at the beginning and end of school, and if the Headteacher/Principal decides it necessary, at break times as well.

4.6 In the Headteacher absence the senior teacher on site will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to the Adverse Weather Policy.

5. Arrangements and pay for staff

5.1 If employees' normal travel to work arrangements are disrupted in the event of exceptionally poor weather conditions, employees should make every effort to get to school where it is safe to do so. This includes in circumstances where the school may be closed to pupils.

5.2 Where the Headteacher considers it was not safe/possible for the employee to travel to school, or they instructed staff not to attend work. Every effort should be made for the employee to work from home or make alternative arrangements to work.

5.3 In the event that the school is closed and it is not considered possible for an individual to work from home or make any other arrangements to work, time off with pay will be granted for the duration of the disturbance. Where the Headteacher considers leave should be unpaid, Payroll must be informed.

Appendix 1 – Severe Weather Information for Parents

INSERT SCHOOL NAME

SCHOOLS MAY ADAPT THIS APPENDIX TO REFLECT LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

Should very severe weather conditions prevail, I would be grateful if parents would observe the following procedure:

The school will remain open at all times and children will be expected to attend school unless -

- A) You have previously been notified of school closure
- B) Closure information has been posted under “Emergency School Notices” on:
 - Somerset Learning Platform through “Closure alert”
<https://slp.somerset.org.uk/Lists/Emergency%20School%20Closures%20Today/ClosedToday.aspx>
(for schools in the Somerset area)
 - <http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/community-safety-crime/emergency/emergency-closures/emergency-closures-and-information/>
(for schools in the North Somerset Area)
 - <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/school-closures>
(for schools in the Bath & North East Somerset Area)
- C) Closure information has been posted on the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust website <http://www.bathwellsmat.org/>
- D) Closure information has been posted on the School’s own website – **INSERT SCHOOL WEBSITE ADDRESS**
- E) Radio announcements have been broadcast, listing the schools as specifically being closed. Please listen to local radio station. **INSERT DETAILS OF LOCAL RADIO STATION IF SCHOOL IS AWARE**
- F) Children live too far and conditions are too bad even to attempt a journey

Parents are expected to check the website and/or make themselves aware of the radio broadcasts when it is clear that a closure is a possibility.

The school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal; parents should endeavour to contact the school to let them know they are on their way if likely to be delayed. The school recognises there will be isolated instances where families are cut off, even where the clear majority of children can get into school. In such instances parents should inform the school of the circumstances of this exceptional situation, as the school has a duty to clarify the circumstances of each case so as to be able to formally authorise the absence to the Local Authority.

Parents acting on the assumption that the school would be closed without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevents the child coming into school risks their child being registered as an unauthorised absence.

Where the school is officially closed, all pupils absence is counted as authorised absence.

In the event of snow some pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents, children and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous.

Before and after school opening hours parents are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide on the school playground.

During adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out of bounds to parents and children at the beginning and end of the school day.

If in any doubt, and conditions are very bad indeed, please ring one of the following telephone numbers after 8.00am. These are the numbers of parents/staff who have volunteered to act as messengers should it be necessary. We will endeavour to make a decision about school closure as early in the day as practical, ideally before 7am. PLEASE DO NOT PHONE THE SCHOOL.

After a period of closure, a message will be sent to the parents/staff below to advise them of the school's reopening. Messages will also be posted on The Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust website and the school website.

INSERT NAME	INSERT CONTACT NUMBER

In the event of the school having to close during the day due to unforeseen worsening weather or similar unforeseen circumstances, parents will be contacted by phone either at home or work and asked to collect their child/ren. Such an early release will only be contemplated in very extreme circumstances. Children will not be sent home unless accompanied by a parent or adult nominated by a parent. Please contact the people listed above if weather conditions have deteriorated so badly.

It is unlikely that a prediction will be made about the day following a day of closure due to severe weather. Every effort will be made to keep the school open and parents should ensure that children should attend.