



Unavoidable School Closure Guidelines and Procedures

Date effective from	November 2023
Date approved by Principal	November 2023
Policy Prepared by	Mrs T Jones, AVP & Director of Business & Finance

UNAVOIDABLE SCHOOL CLOSURE

The Legal Position

There are some exceptional and emergency circumstances that may arise when it is necessary to temporarily close the whole or part of the academy. The decision to close should not be taken lightly. However, in view of the nature of unplanned and unexpected events a decision based on a site specific risk assessment may be required to be made on the day of the closure.

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 provides that the conduct of the school shall be under the direction of the Board of Trustees and that the Principal is responsible for the management of the academy. The decision to close therefore rests with the Principal and Board of Trustees.

The Principal must establish the nature of the problem. Whatever the reason for an unavoidable closure the Principal should contact the Chair of Trustees (or Vice Chair) to inform them of the nature of the problem and how this may be resolved. If, after consideration the academy is deemed unfit to receive students then it would clearly not be possible for the academy to meet as intended. Assuming the Principal has acted reasonably, this should not place the Principal or Board of Trustees in breach of their obligations.

Possible Reasons for Closure

The following is a list of possible reasons for full or partial closure:-

- Breakdown of major equipment – eg. boiler
- Fire
- Flood
- Major damage and vandalism
- Failure of utilities – water, electricity or gas
- Safety – asbestos, gas leak, oil spillage
- Pandemics (refer to Pandemic Policy)
- Epidemics
- Infestations
- Extreme or adverse weather
- Bomb alert
- Excessive staff absence
- Industrial Action

Reference should be made to policies relating to the above eg. The School Emergency Plan, Health and Safety Policy etc.

Possible Alternatives to Closure

The following could be considered as possible alternatives to closure:-

- Partial closure of a Key Stage
- Alternative accommodation (eg. church hall, other school)

Careful consideration would need to be given regarding the provision of transport, additional catering and basic amenities.

Communication

Following consultation, the Principal should inform, as appropriate, those listed below of the decision to close and the length of closure. If the closure is extended each of the parties should receive updates on a daily basis.

- Staff
- Parents/Carers and students
- Catering – kitchen
- Police
- Transport providers
- Other Support Services – eg, supply agencies, peripatetic staff
- Contractors

Notification will be via text, Synergy, website, Social Media, telephone, letter, email, notices on school gate or local press. **Any decision regarding closure due to adverse weather will aim to be made by 7.30am when possible to avoid unnecessary staff travel.** This assessment of the school site will be made by the Facilities & Operations Manager/ the AVP - Director of Business & Finance and the Chair of Trustees in consultation with the Principal.

A report should be provided at the next full meeting of the Board of Trustees outlining the rationale for the decision to close, whether arrangements made were reasonable and satisfactory and that steps have been taken to fulfil the requirements relating to the attendance of staff and students at the school.

Alternative Duties

There is an expectation that staff make every effort to attend school. If this is not possible, the following arrangements should be considered:-

- Alternative duties to be undertaken at home or at another venue;
- Arrange for staff to attend another school or venue near their home. This must be pre-planned and arrangements made in advance with the school beforehand;
- Where staff have undertaken alternative duties they should be considered to have attended for duty and are entitled to be paid;

In the circumstances where staff do not attend or undertake alternative duties this should be treated as leave of absence with or without pay.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR UNAVOIDABLE SCHOOL CLOSURE

ACTION REQUIRED BY THE PRINCIPAL OR, IN THE PRINCIPAL'S ABSENCE THE AVP – DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS & FINANCE AND THE FACILITIES & OPERATIONS MANAGER

STEP	STAFF	TASK
1	SI/GFG	Cleaning staff on site to consult with Steve Iddon Senior Site Supervisor Tel No: (07810 542186) in the first instance. Once Steve has been consulted SI to make contact with Principal Mrs Gorman (07800 839203) and Tracey Jones (07979 324688) in the first instance. Mrs Gorman to make contact with the Chair of Trustees, Mrs Margaret Scrivens Tel: (01772 330042) Mobile: (07962115954) and a decision will be made by 7.30am where possible.
2	ALL	Staff to notify SL/HOF/MAH by 7am if unable to make it into school
3	GFG/TJ	Mrs Gorman Principal, will make contact with Assistant Vice Principal Tracey Jones (07979 324688) to confirm the outcome of the decision made.
4	TJ	Tracey Jones – Assistant Vice Principal, to contact Local Authority (01772 531555) and School Bus provider Avacoach.
5	NJT	Nic Tucker, Senior Assistant Vice Principal to send out a message via Synergy to Parent/Carers and staff.
6	TJ/EB	Tracey Jones, Assistant Vice Principal to make contact with ICT Technician to put a message on the schools website and facebook.
7	HOF/SLT	SLT/HOF to make contact with all relevant subject staff to inform staff of school closure.
8	MAH TJ	Contact supply agencies to inform of closure/confirm reopening. Contact Aspen's to advise of reason for closure. (KLK to make contact with any lettings booked in).
9	SI	Place notice on school gate informing of closure. Any contractors on site to be notified.
10	SLT/Senior Form Tutors	Liaise with any students on site and ensure necessary arrangements for them to be collected or return home.