

OAKDENE PRIMARY SCHOOL

EMERGENCY CLOSURE POLICY



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1. Unavoidable School Closures Policy

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

- Severe weather including snow, flooding or storms
- Mass medical emergencies to pupils or employees
- A national pandemic
- A major incident in the locality of the school where emergency services or the local authority have advised the school to be closed.
- Problems with the school site, for example loss of power supply, heating failures, hygiene problems due to lack of hot water, or fire damage.
- Longer term disruption to transport, for example through petrol or diesel shortages.

2. Closure due to Severe Weather

The decision to close a school will normally rest with the Executive Head Teacher, (or in their absence a member of School's Senior Leadership Team) and be confirmed with the Chair of Governors (or if they are unavailable, the Vice Chair) and the Local Authority. The decision should be made where possible before 7.30am and on the basis of information received from the media about weather, supplemented by on the spot observation, either personally or from employees 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). This will also require dialogue with school transport providers.
- Breakdown of school essential services (heating, electrical services, water, storm damage etc).
- The number of employees that can reach the site.

The Executive Head Teacher will advise employees by following the up-to-date emergency closure plan. The plan is reviewed and updated by the School Business Manager.

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EIS and the Communications Team have systems in place to ensure that schools are clear on how to alert the Council of a school closure in the current climate including closing date and potential reopening date.

The Executive Head Teacher will complete a form on Stockton Council's website www.stockton.gov.uk/tellusonce. The Executive Head Teacher has a username and password to access this link. If we have any issues accessing the form we must contact Juliette McLaren on 01642 527101.

If Oakdene Primary School is closed but we are still carrying out online teaching, the Executive Head Teacher is still required to complete the form.

Parents/carers will be informed of any school closure through MarvellousMe, the school website and local media. During periods of possible disruption due to bad weather or premises issues, the Executive Head Teacher will advise parents/carers and pupils to listen to any local radio station. Closures will be considered on a daily basis.

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

3. School closure during school hours

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 pupils can be safely returned home later in the day. In such cases the school will ensure that pupils are collected from school. The school Critical Incident Plan (see Critical Incident Plan) may also apply. In these cases the school will inform parents of the closure. Parents/carers who are subsequently unable to collect their child and need to make alternative arrangements should telephone the school. It may be necessary to obtain verbal permission from parents/carers for their child to be collected by another named adult. In the event of a 'during the school day' closure the same procedures of informing parents/carers, the Chair of Governors and the Local Authority will apply.

If school are notified that there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the school we will take immediate action. The Executive Head Teacher will immediately seek advice from Public Health England and identify any children or staff who have been in close contact with the affected case to reflect the current guidance at the time.

4. Staff attendance

Although it is recognised that severe weather conditions make it difficult for employees to get to and from work, unless advised to the contrary by the Executive Head Teacher, then the expectation is that employees will present themselves for work. Travel to work/school is regarded by both the Police and the Council's Highways Management as an essential journey, and every effort

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should be made to get to work unless it is known that your School has closed or you consider it unsafe to do so.

During the pandemic, the availability of staff may vary on a day-to-day basis. Oakdene Primary School will endeavour to take every measure to secure supply cover etc to enable school to open should it be deemed safe to do so.

If we have an outbreak the Executive head Teacher may be advised to close the school for a 'deep clean' to prevent further infection.

Clearance of Snow Within the School Site

Our Winter Gritting Plan is available on the website and also attached to school gates. The school is responsible for snow clearance and the clearing of approach paths is the specific task of the Caretaker. The clearance of public roads is the responsibility of the Highways Department.

In the Event of the School Being Closed

If Oakdene Primary School is closed it is the responsibility of the Executive Head Teacher to ensure that the following events happen:

- The decision is ratified with the Chair of Governors
- MarvellousMe and the school website has been updated with closure information
- The information is passed to the Local Authority as soon as possible
- If possible, notices are placed on both school entrances advising visitors, parents/carers and pupils that the school is closed
- If it is safe to do so, staffed by teachers/teaching assistants who live locally to deal with any pupils who arrive at the school unescorted until parents/carers or emergency contacts can collect the pupils. These tasks do not all have to be completed by the Executive Head Teacher, although they have the overall responsibility for ensuring each has been carried out.

Rights Respecting Schools

Children have a right to an education. All children should have access to a face to face /remote education should school need to close for any reason in term time.