



Rye Primary Policy

Policy Title:	Severe Weather Procedures (School Closure)
LT Responsibility:	Head of School
Review Body:	Executive Headteacher
Date:	February 2021
Review:	February 2022

Introduction

Context

Many schools face difficulties in maintaining a normal service during severe weather conditions, such as a heavy snowfall or icy roads and footpaths. Local and national guidance to Headteachers, however, is that they should remain open wherever possible, to minimise the disruption to children's education and the inconvenience to parents and families. Schools are advised to have plans in place to enable a suitable programme of education to be provided for pupils who do attend, albeit with reduced numbers of colleagues. Headteachers are required to weigh up the risks of reduced supervision, late journeys home and minor bumps, against the disruption to learning caused by a closure.

Nevertheless, the Headteacher has complete discretion to close the school in anticipated severe conditions that would put pupils at risk. Where possible, the school will contact parents to let them know of such a decision and every care will be taken to ensure that pupils are not sent out in dangerous conditions.

The decision to close before or during the school day will be made by the Head of School. The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

1. Insufficient colleagues are able to come in to keep the school running safely;
2. Conditions on site are dangerous;
3. Conditions are considered to be, or anticipated to become, too hazardous for travel.

The Executive Headteacher is kept informed throughout.



Action Plan

Advice for Pupils, Parents and Families

IN A 'WORSE CASE SCENARIO' – WE WILL LOOK AFTER THE PUPILS.

THE SCHOOL WILL REMAIN OPEN WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

If this is not possible, we may initiate a delayed start to the day

If the 'Severe Weather Procedure' is implemented, families should first **delay** their journey to the site and aim to **arrive for 11:00am registration** instead. Pupils will be expected to wear school uniform but it is strongly recommended that they wear suitable outer clothing for travelling to and from site.

If we are to close prior to the start of the school day

In the event the school is deemed unsafe to open, the Head of School has the authority to close. Therefore, on days where a local amber ('be prepared') or red ('take action') weather warning is issued¹ for Rye which could prevent the site from opening, the Head of School will make an informed decision based on information from the site managers, colleagues and public transport providers as to whether it is necessary to close.

1. Closure will be reported on the school website **no later than 7:30am**:
www.ryeprimary.co.uk
2. Closure will be reported to the local authority and alerts made via their website:
www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/schoolclosures
3. Parents and families will be alerted to the closure using our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/ryeprimary
4. Parents and families will be alerted to the closure using ParentMail.

We appreciate that during severe weather pupils may arrive later than normal. Parents should endeavour to contact the office when pupils are delayed or on the way. The preferred way to contact the office is by using the email: office@ryeprimary.co.uk. **Please understand the school switchboard is very busy at these times.**

We recognise there will be isolated instances where families are cut off even where a clear majority of pupils can get to us. In such instances, parents should inform the office of their particular circumstances in order to have the absence authorised. When the school is formally closed, all pupils are registered with an authorised absence.

Parents acting on the assumption that the school will close without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the office of circumstances preventing their child from coming in, risk an unauthorised absence.

¹ Warnings are monitored via www.bbc.co.uk/weather



If severe weather affects us during the day

We will make all practicable efforts to keep parents and families informed as to the ongoing situation during severe weather conditions via our website, social media and local authority website. We appreciate such conditions can create a degree of uncertainty and in turn challenges for families however **parents are expected to check our websites or follow our social media when it is clear that closure is a possibility.**

In the event that weather becomes increasingly severe, the Head of School has the authority to close. The Head of School will make an informed decision based on information from the site managers, colleagues, public transport providers and weather warnings in local areas² and as to whether it is necessary to close. During periods of severe weather, extra-curricular activities are suspended.

1. Closure will be reported on the school website:
www.ryeprimary.co.uk
2. Closure will be reported to the local authority and alerts made via their website:
www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/schoolclosures
3. Parents and families will be alerted to the closure using our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/ryeprimary
4. Parents will be alerted to the closure using ParentMail.

Closure and early release are only contemplated in extreme circumstances.

Duty of care

In the event of a pupil being unable to leave or be collected, the school will continue its duty of care and look after pupils. This will be undertaken by no less than two colleagues – one of which should be a member of the leadership team, in all but extreme circumstances.

PLEASE HELP US TO SAFEGUARD ALL PUPILS IN OUR CARE: We kindly request that unless an absolute necessity, parents refrain from telephoning the school to request the individual dismissal of their children. Also, we kindly request that parents refrain from contacting their children directly and instructing them to seek dismissal by the school. The decision to dismiss must be made in the interests of all pupils.

Studying at home

In the event the school is closed, colleagues are expected to begin remote education in line with the day's timetable before 09:00am. Pupils are expected to join these sessions at the normal lesson start times to minimise the impact of closure on their studies. In the absence of such work, pupils should use the internet and undertake similar activities and: www.bbc.co.uk/education and/or www.thenational.academy (Oak Academy).

² Warnings are monitored via www.bbc.co.uk/weather



Advice for Colleagues

THE SCHOOL WILL REMAIN OPEN WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

If severe weather could prevent opening, the Head of School will risk assess

1. Establish if the school site is safe to open – **nominated 'local colleagues' should contact the Head of School by 7:00am**. School leaders will use designated communication tools to ensure decisions are communicated to others;
2. Ensure any closure is reported on the school website **no later than 7:30am**:
www.ryeprimary.co.uk
3. Ensure any closure is reported to the local authority and alerts made via their website:
www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/schoolclosures
4. Ensure colleagues are alerted to the closure using our Facebook:
www.facebook.com/ryeprimary
5. Instigate the 'Severe Weather Procedure'.

If the weather prevents or delays travel to work

We acknowledge that some colleagues may experience difficulty in reporting for work during periods of severe weather and other exceptional conditions. That notwithstanding, difficulties with transport or travel caused by the location of an employee's home in relation to their place of work are primarily the responsibility of the employee, and it is the duty of all employees to make every effort to fulfil their contractual obligation to report for work and attend for their normal contracted hours.

Local weather warnings³ should guide colleagues in determining whether it is considered safe to travel.

Where a colleague decides it is not possible or feasible to report for work or anticipate delays in arrival, they must **inform human resources (Matt Robins), the Head of School (Kelly Martin) and their phase leader, who will need to organise cover, via email by 7:00am**.

If we initiate a late opening

If a late opening is determined, colleagues will be expected to report for work by 10:00am for pupil registration at 11.00am.

If severe weather affects us during the day

In the event that weather becomes increasingly severe and it is likely to cause unsafe transport or travel home at the normal time, the Head of School has the authority to close and inform colleagues of new arrangements.

Colleagues wishing to leave site early should discuss this with the Head of School.

Colleagues should not offer lifts or drive any pupil home even with the permission of parents.

During periods of severe weather, extra-curricular activities are suspended.

³ Warnings are monitored via www.bbc.co.uk/weather



1. Closure will be reported on the school website:
www.ryeprimary.co.uk
2. Closure will be reported to the local authority and alerts made via their website:
www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/schoolclosures
3. Parents and families will be alerted to the closure using our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/ryeprimary
4. Parents will be alerted to the closure using ParentMail.

Closure and early release are only contemplated in extreme circumstances.

In the absence of others, colleagues are asked to be flexible

In order to fulfil our duty of care amidst a changing range of factors, we may:

- Bring together groups and classes with teachers, assistants and associates;
- Re-arrange the curriculum so as to best deploy colleagues and manage pupils;
- Use other colleagues or volunteers to provide supervision or oversight of alternative activities.

Class sizes are typically limited to thirty pupils however more than thirty in one class due to temporary exceptional circumstances is not a reason to close the school.

Setting work for pupils

In the event the school is closed, colleagues are expected to begin remote education in line with the day's timetable before 09:00am. Pupils are expected to join these sessions at the normal lesson start times to minimise the impact of closure on their studies.



Appendix 1: Early Release Procedures

THE SCHOOL WILL REMAIN OPEN WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

IN A 'WORSE CASE SCENARIO' – WE WILL LOOK AFTER THE PUPILS.

Overview

When the 'Severe Weather Procedure' is in operation, the status of the school will be reported as one of the following:

- 'School is open as normal';
- 'School is subject to partial closure';
- 'School is closed'.

In the case of 'full closure' or 'partial closure':

- Closure will be reported on the school website;
- Closure will be reported to the local authority and alerts made via their website;
- Parents will be alerted to the closure using ParentMail;
- Parents will be alerted to the closure using our Facebook page.

During 'full closure' or 'partial closure' **children will only be released into the care of a named contact. In the event existing named contacts are unable to pick the child up from school, the office must be given full details of a responsible adult given permission to collect the child that day.** It is the responsibility of parents to ensure the school has up-to-date preferences during severe weather. The school uses the following preferences as a guide but also takes a broad range of factors into consideration when choosing to dismiss:

- 'Leave school with a named contact (to be stated)';
- 'Remain at School until 3.00pm to be collected';
- No parental response defaults to 'remain at school until 3.00pm to be collected'.

The school will undertake a risk assessment before sending pupils out in adverse conditions. Typically, dismissal is managed in the following manner **though can be dependent on circumstances:**

Parents will be notified of the manner of dismissal via ParentMail, website and other social media. In the event conditions are so severe that transport services are halted or it is deemed unsafe for pupils to travel on school transport, parents will be required to make arrangements to collect their children or arrange for a trusted adult with identification to do so. For pupils in outlying villages, our preference is that children are picked up from the school by a trusted adult with identification.



Appendix 2: Snow and Ice Procedures

THE SCHOOL WILL REMAIN OPEN WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

Overview

In the event of snow, we will attempt to clear and salt arterial pathways. Parents, pupils and visitors should be vigilant as pathways, even when cleared, can remain dangerous. Pupils will be reminded of this in registration.

In icy conditions, the site managers will assess the situation and typically salt pathways as follows:

- School site;
- School main entrance;
- Other external walkways;
- School side entrance including nursery.

Essential pathways will be maintained as well as possible throughout the day. On closure days, pathways will be maintained on a daily basis by site managers so as to prevent build-up of ice and snow.

Access to site

During severe weather conditions, outdoor areas may be out of bounds to pupils at the beginning and end of school, and potentially at break and lunch times if the Head of School deems it necessary. Alternative activities will be provided.

Safe Behaviour

We kindly request that pupils, parents and visitors do not:

- Slide on any snow or ice present on the site;
- Throw snowballs or initiate snowball fights;
- Bring snow or ice into the School buildings.

Studying at home

In the event the school is closed, colleagues are expected to begin remote education in line with the day's timetable before 09:00am. Pupils are expected to join these sessions at the normal lesson start times to minimise the impact of closure on their studies. In the absence of such work, pupils should use the internet and undertake similar activities and: www.bbc.co.uk/education and/or www.thenational.academy (Oak Academy).



Appendix 3: Arrangements for Dismissal

FOR SCHOOL REFERENCE ONLY

Administration

1. A message reporting the school's awareness of the weather conditions appears on the website;
2. The Head of School initiates procedures and gets copies of preferences, register and staff list;
3. Team 1 is formed to support the main office, adults collecting in reception and communications;
4. Team 2 is formed to support the pupil body and colleagues around the School.

The decision to close is made

5. The Head of School decides to close the School;
6. Closure is reported on the School website;
7. Closure is reported to the local authority (CZone);
8. Parents are alerted to the closure using ParentMail;
9. Parents are alerted to the closure using our Facebook page.

School

10. All pupils are directed to return to their classroom by a member of the leadership team;
11. Registers are taken under the direction of a member of the leadership team;
12. Registers are cross referenced with information provided by parents and families;
13. Pupils collect their siblings from the relevant classrooms around the school;
14. Pupils are dismissed along with their younger siblings in line with parental preferences;
15. Pupils remaining at school will be supervised by senior leaders.

Collecting a child

16. Parents or a trusted adult may collect their child from reception with identification.

Colleagues leaving site

17. Colleagues wishing to leave site early should discuss this with the Head of School;
18. Staff list is updated to reflect those colleagues leaving site early.