

## Townhill Infant School Policy for Emergency Closure

### Introduction

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

- Severe weather including snow, flooding or storms or Pandemic outbreak
- Disruption to transport, for example through petrol or diesel shortages
- Accommodation problems, for example loss of power supply, heating failures or fire damage.

We will always endeavour to remain open where possible.

### Closure due to severe weather

The decision to close a school will normally rest with the Headteacher or in their absence the next most senior member of staff and be confirmed with the Chair of Governors or if she/he is unavailable the Vice Chair. Where the forced closure is likely to affect a number of schools the Head teachers usually reach a joint decision before contacting their governors.

The decision to close will be made where possible before 7.30 am (on the first day of closure) 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.

Subsequent closure days should be announced by 5pm on the closure day. However should more adverse weather happen overnight then the decision to close may have to be made on the following morning. If this is the case then the procedure will be the same as above and parents will be notified no later than 7.30a.m.

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

- Access to the school or condition of the school site i.e. road conditions (obstructions, snow, ice, flooding etc), playground surfaces, walkways, main entrances
- Breakdown of school essential services (heating, electrical services, water, storm damage etc) or likely staffing levels.

The Headteacher or her delegate will advise staff and Governors through e-mail and cascaded phone calls, and advise parents and pupils to check the local authority website ([www.southampton.gov.uk](http://www.southampton.gov.uk)), listen to local radio stations e.g Radio Solent and monitor the school website where details of any closures will be published. We will supplement this by using Parentmail email and text service. The Site manager will post closure notices on the school gates daily.

The whole school community, including any After School clubs / Pre-School will be made regularly aware of this procedure as incidents can occur with little or no warning.

### During School Day Closure Guidance

On occasions it may be necessary for the 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 we will inform parents using the Parentmail email and text service and ensure that children are collected from school. The children will remain with school staff until they have been collected.

### 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 if at all possible. However, staff need to take responsibility for their own safety and should pay attention to local and national weather and travel advice. Contract staff (Catering) will be advised of any emergency requirements.

#### Clearance of Snow

When severe weather is forecast, the Site manager will 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 a child's safety being at risk, for instance if they are let out at break time and the playground area is unsafe, we have a responsibility in inclement weather to keep the children indoors. This decision will be based on regularly updated risk assessments.

#### In the event of an emergency Evacuation

If the school has to evacuate in an emergency for an example a threat has been received the school will follow its emergency evacuation procedure. If the staff and children cannot return back to the school building the staff and children will remain in the designated evacuation area. The admin staff will be deployed to the nearest school and will contact parents using the Parentmail email and text service. The children will remain with staff in the evacuation area until they are collected by parents. If for any reason the school needs to remain closed for the following day then the closure procedures will be followed as detailed earlier.

#### 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 local authority website is updated.
- The information is passed to relevant media agencies e.g Radio Solent as soon as possible
- Notices are placed on school entrances advising visitors, parents and pupils that school is closed, where possible.
- School is appropriately staffed by teachers/teaching assistants to deal with any pupils who arrive at school unescorted until parents or emergency contacts can collect the pupils.
- Use the Parentmail email and text service to inform parents.

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

Reviewed Date: February 2018

Next Review Date: September 2018