

Swinford National School
Emergency School Closures Policy

Rationale

The need for the school to devise a policy on emergency closures in recent years is primarily due to inclement weather, such as heavy snowfalls, high winds etc.

Aims and Objectives

- To provide for the welfare of all pupils while on the school premises
- To ensure a safe, child friendly school environment is available to all children
- To conform with Health and Safety legislation

Roles and Responsibilities

Emergency closures in the school place particular responsibilities on various personnel within the school chain of command-

- Positive school community feedback
- Conformance with Health and Safety legislation
- Maintaining a safe school environment for all staff, children and parents

Procedures

Heavy Snowfall

In the event of a heavy snowfall, the Principal shall consult with the Chairperson of the Board of Management as soon as is feasible, and a decision is made as to whether it is in the interests of all parties to close the school.

If it is decided to close the school, the school authorities will contact all school staff and parents/guardians by text to inform all that the school will not be opening.

The bus operator for the Special Class pupils will be contacted by the Principal or another designated person, confirming that the school will not be opening. The Principal will also inform the School Inspector of the Emergency Closure.

Disconnection of Services

Where water or electricity services to the school are to be disconnected, a week's notification is normally given to the school authorities. This enables the school to furnish the parent body with the relevant advance warning of such closures via text and/or note. The Principal will also inform the School Inspector of the Emergency Closure.

High Winds/Thunderstorms

The procedures in place for heavy snowfall are generally replicated in the event of storms/lightning i.e. parents and bus operators are contacted via text and informed that the school will remain closed. If the school has already opened and is in operation when high winds etc, occur and remaining on the premises is a risk to all, teachers will remain on the premises until all children have been collected by either parents/guardians or bus operators. The Principal will also inform the School Inspector of the Emergency Closure.

Critical Incident/Death

In some instances the school might remain closed for pupils in the event of a critical incident or death of a staff member, Board of Management member or pupil. Parents are informed of such closures either by note or text whichever is appropriated. In this particular instance, the school may remain open to staff and Board of Management or Parents Association if issues such as church services, Guards of Honour, readings or counselling is required (See Critical Incident Policy).

Please note

All half days and in-Service closures are notified to parents at least one week in advance.

This policy was reviewed in October 2016 and was ratified by the Board of Management on December 15th 2016. This policy will be reviewed in two years.

Signed: _____

Chairman, Board of Management, Swinford NS