



Christ Church CofE (VA) Primary School and Nursery

# **Severe Weather and Public Emergency Plan for School**

**December 2014**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

This guidance sets out the actions schools need to take in the event of severe weather or if a public emergency is declared by the Local Authority.

## **2 Closure Decisions**

The decision to close a school in severe weather, or when responding to a public emergency, should be taken by the Headteacher based on the following:

- local conditions
- an assessment of risk
- information from the Local Authority

Schools with reduced teaching staff should consider staying open and providing group activities to limit the impact on working parents.

Unless specifically told otherwise, staff will be expected to use their best endeavours to attend work without putting themselves or others at risk. When the Police recommend that motorists undertake only essential journeys, this is considered to include travel to work and school.

## **3. Preparation for severe weather**

In severe weather the heating will be left on during 'out of hours' periods for frost protection purposes.

Staff will be briefed in advance to ensure they know what is expected of them.

Parents, volunteers and visitors will be briefed in advance to ensure they understand how they can get up to date information (e.g. [Hertsdirect.org](http://Hertsdirect.org)).

Regular suppliers/contractors are informed of procedures and confirm arrangements are in place for essential services/deliveries.

Where the school is open, risk assessments must be undertaken to ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff and all site users. Inspections of paths and walkways will be carried out regularly and documented. This should include local arrangements for clearing and salting when ice or snow appears, as well as any failures to the surfaces.

Where gales of high wind warnings have been issued, the site should be checked for dead or damaged branches/trees and other potential hazards to people or property.

## **3. Informing parents:**

The school uses the Closure Notification System (CNS) to inform the Local Authority and parents of closures. Messages received by this system will be posted on a public facing noticeboard linked from [Hertsdirect.org](http://Hertsdirect.org). An email will also be automatically generated and sent to the nominated radio stations. It usually takes at least 10 minutes for the message to show on the noticeboard.

If at all possible, the school will text the Closure Notification System and notify parents between midday and mid-afternoon of the day before. **All messages are cleared from the Closure Notification System each day at midday.**

If the decision cannot be made until the morning, **the school will endeavour to inform the parents as early as possible** to reach parents and children before they set off for school.

#### **4. Actions taken by the school to inform parents**

- Parent Mail will be sent out
- A short message will appear on the Hertsdirect.org
- A banner will go on the school website
- Three radio stations will be informed – BBC Three Counties (90.4fm), Heart (101.7), BOB FM (106.7)
- A short message will go on the school blog

#### **5. Reopening of the school following closure**

When the severe weather has passed, the school will check their premises before announcing that it will reopen. The site will be inspected for signs of damage (e.g. heating failure, burst pipes or damaged trees).

The Headteacher will use the school systems for advising staff of the situation and update the school's status on the closure notification system.