



# Guidance for parents and carers on school closure due to bad weather or other emergency

We want to work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure the safety of children at all times. These guidelines outline the procedures for dealing with school closures during bad weather or other emergency.

## Parental Role

### We would like you to:

- Ensure your child wears appropriate outdoor clothes throughout the winter.
- Decide whether it is safe for your child to travel to school in bad weather, either by school transport or on foot.
- Provide the school with information about emergency contacts to whom your child can be sent at short notice if you are not available. Also tell the Head Teacher about any changes to this information and to your daytime contact details.
- Provide the school with a bad weather address within safe walking distance of the school.

### Also:

- If school transport is not running please don't take your child – or other children – to school yourself unless it is safe for you to do so.

You will be responsible for ensuring that the children you took to school are transported home again and therefore need to be available in the event that the school has to close early due to deteriorating weather conditions.

- In difficult weather conditions pupils should not wait any longer than 15 minutes past the normal pick up time before returning home. In case the transport doesn't arrive please make sure you have made alternative arrangements for your child.
- If your child travels by school transport you are responsible for their safety *to and from the pick up/drop off point* whether they use school transport or a public service vehicle.

**School transport contractors** have been told not to allow children to walk home alone from drop-off points *under any circumstances* during extreme weather conditions. If you can't meet or arrange for your child to be met, the school transport will return them to a designated location.

**Public service vehicles** – drivers of these vehicles follow a specified route and keep to timetables – they cannot make special arrangements.



## When will schools be closed?

Head Teachers decide if and when schools should close due to bad weather or another emergency. In bad weather they will decide this after receiving information about local weather conditions. This decision can be made during any time, day or night.

During bad weather some staff may not be able to get to school – so the school may have to close because there are too few teachers present. Sometimes only part of the school will be closed or only some of the pupils will be dismissed early.

If you are concerned about local weather conditions contact the school. You may wish to collect your child yourself and are free to do so provided you make arrangements with the school.

## Nursery, Primary and Special Schools

If your child attends a Nursery, Primary or Special School, which is to close early, the school will contact you by telephone. If this is not possible the school will contact your named 'emergency contact'.

No child will be released from school without contact being made. It is important contact details are current and the people named are available – particularly during bad weather.

## Secondary Schools

Because of the large number of pupils in Secondary Schools, it is impossible to inform all parents in advance of emergency closures and schools may dismiss pupils without first contacting parents.

Individual schools will let parents know of any local arrangements.

## What education might my child be missing?

Some parents and pupils worry that important examinations or work is missed because the school is closed or conditions make it difficult to attend. But the *safety and welfare of children must take precedence* when making judgements about travelling to school in bad weather.

Arrangements can be made for lost time to be made up and examinations can be rearranged.



## Further Information

Outwith school hours, your local radio station is a good place to find out information on school closures. The following radio stations receive updated information every 15 mins from our website:

### **Northsound 1**

FM 96.9

Tel: 01224 337000

### **Northsound 2**

MW 1035 kHz

### **BBC Radio Scotland**

FM 92.4 - 94.7

MW 810 kHz

### **Moray Firth Radio**

FM 97.4

MW 1107 kHz

### **North East Community Radio**

FM 97.1 - 106.4

Tel: 01467 632878

### **Waves Radio**

FM 101.2

Tel: 01779 491012

### **Original 106 FM**

Tel: 01224 293800

### **Twitter**

<http://twitter.com/aberdeenshire>

## **Aberdeenshire Council Website**

[www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/closures](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/closures)

You also have the option to sign up to receive email alerts when your school(s) updates their closure status:

[www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/alerts/index.asp](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/alerts/index.asp)

## **School Information Line**

Tel: 0870 054 4999 then 02 + your school's 4 Digit Pin. If you cannot get through first time, please do not put this number on redial. This will only lead to the line being busier.

Please note: Call charges to the School Information Line will depend on your contract with your telephone service provider, for example, calling from your home telephone may differ in price from calling from your mobile phone.

## **Public Transport Unit**

Tel: 01224 665194 (9am-5pm only)

## **Education Offices (9am-5pm only)**

**Banff** Tel: 01261 813340

**Fraserburgh** Tel: 01346 515303

**Peterhead** Tel: 01779 473269

**Inverurie** Tel: 01467 620981

**Stonehaven** Tel: 01569 766960

If you require the above information provided in large print or translated into another language, please contact Aberdeenshire Council Education, Learning and Leisure on 01224 664630.