

St Clare's RC Primary School

UNAVOIDABLE SCHOOL CLOSURES POLICY

Where a Headteacher makes the decision to close a school on the grounds of exceptional circumstances (including following a critical incident), the major determining factor must be the safety and welfare of the children and employees. Under the terms of the relevant School Regulations, such a decision may only be made by the Headteacher, and would have the status of an "unavoidable closure".

Priority Alerts Checklist for Unavoidable School Closures

1	Manchester City Council	Notify Education Services.
2	Own School Website, answering machine message and text messaging service	The School website and answering machine message should be updated as soon as possible and a text message circulated to all families.
3	Radio Stations	This information must not be shared outside of the School's Governing Body and SLT <u>Key 103 – Newsdesk: 0161 288 5070</u> <u>news@key103.co.uk</u> Register with Key 103 and update as required http://www.key103.co.uk/school-closures-registration
4	Chair of Governor	The Chair of Governors should be made aware of the Head Teacher's decision to close the School beforehand
5	Risk Assessment <u>See section 5</u>	Review Risk Assessment re. safe access and egress to the School premises.

1. Typical school closure situations may include the following: -

Severe weather conditions or other major emergency:

- Heating system failures (Boilers, flooding after leaks etc)
- Snow and ice (affecting access, egress or movement around the building)
- Public transport failure (resulting in staff and pupils not being able to get to work)
- Flooding

Critical incidents (which may lead to a school closure):

- Traumatic death or serious injury of a pupil or staff member on the premises
- Outbreak of a serious communicable disease or disorder
- Fire damage

2. When the unavoidable closure is a result of a critical incident and is determined as such, the Headteacher should consult the Business Continuity Plan to determine the appropriate level of support determined by the nature of the "Critical Incident".

- 2.1 Where a closure results from weather, health or safety, or mechanical failure or threat, the following standard advice will be recommended to the Headteacher:
- The Headteacher must take all reasonable steps to alert parents and carers that the school will be closed. Such steps may include letters to parents, information through local newspapers or radio stations, website notice, announcements on notice boards, letters or messages via siblings attending other local schools or, where practicable, contacting parents and carers by phone/text messaging service. (please refer to page 1 for priority alerts checklist)
 - Children (including secondary school children) should not be sent home unless parents, carers or official contacts have been notified and it is clear that they are aware of the arrangements. It is better for children to be kept in school whatever the circumstances, rather than to be at potential risk.
3. Where possible, facilities should be made available on site, or elsewhere, to accommodate pupils whose parents/carers have not received the message, or who for some other reason have sent a child to school. Such pupils should be appropriately supervised and where practicable the facilities for the provision of school meals should be available.
4. *Where practicable and appropriate, subject to a risk assessment, and following consultation with the recognised teacher associations, facilities should be made available for staff to continue to carry out their duties and responsibilities. Such time may be treated as “gained time” under the terms of the section 133 Regulations of the Education Act 2003 and may be directed by the Headteacher.*
- 4.1 Headteachers will be reminded to report the names of those staff that were unable to get to work due to weather or transport difficulties, without an exceptional circumstance, on the monthly absence return.
5. When seeking advice on preparations for the anticipated impact of serious weather conditions Headteachers should be advised to alert staff of the need to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that they are in school at the normal start times. Furthermore, Headteachers should be advised that access / egress / playground areas should be prepared in order to ensure the safety of pupils and staff and should make the necessary arrangements to have grit/salt supplies on site, to be distributed by school site maintenance staff. Grit supplies should be pre-ordered and available in advance of seasonal bad weather.
6. It is important to remind Headteachers not to rush into a decision to close the school (e.g. poor road conditions). For example, previous experience has shown that circumstances with weather and road conditions and/or staff arrivals can change between 8.30 – 10.00am. It is advisable that emergency mobile phone provision is readily available in case of e-mail and telecommunication difficulty.

Signed:

Approved by the Resources Committee: May 2017

Date of review: Summer Term 2019