



# **ABOYNE ACADEMY**

## **Adverse Weather & Emergency Closure Information**



# Emergency Closure Arrangements

There may be occasions when it is necessary to partially or fully close the school. The information below provides details about the procedures followed on such occasions.

Aberdeenshire Council Education & Children's Services would like to ensure that the education of children is interrupted as little as possible, but accepts that in severe weather conditions the safety of pupils and staff is paramount and that partial; or complete closure of schools may be necessary.

## School Closure Information

Information relating to any partial or complete school closure is available by telephone or on the internet. Details of how to access this information are given below.

**Website:** [www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk) follow the link to school closures.

**Telephone:** 0370 054 4999 then use the pin number 021000 as instructed (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). Where available, we recommend you add the School Information Line number to any 'Favourite Number' package that might be offered from your telephone service provider.

**Email / Text Messaging System:** Where possible a message will be sent out to all parent/carers informing them of the closure of the school.

In addition information about a closure is normally broadcast on the following radio stations:

**BBC Radio Scotland:** FM 92.5 – 94.7 or MW 990

**Northsound 1:** FM 96.9

**Northsound 2:** MW 1035

## **Responsibilities of Parents/Carers**

As a parent/carer your child's safety is of the utmost importance to you. You will be aware of the need for them to wear appropriate outdoor clothing throughout the winter even when it seems fine in the morning. You should also be aware of your responsibilities listed below.

- You must provide the school with information about emergency contacts who can be reached if you are not available and keep the school advised of any changes to this information.
- You must also advise the school of any changes to your daytime contact details.
- You must decide whether it is safe for your child to travel to school in adverse weather conditions, whether by school transport or on foot.
- If your child lives some distance from the school you must make every effort to provide an adverse weather emergency address when asked to do so by the school.
- If normal school transport is not running you must not take your child to school as there will be no buses available at the end of the day.
- If your child travels to school by school transport you are responsible for their safety to and from the pick up/drop off point. You must ensure that your child does not wait for more than 15 minutes at their usual pick up point. If the bus does not come within this period the pupil should return home. Pupils must never wait at any pick up point other than their normal one.
- School transport operators are instructed not to allow children to walk home alone from the drop off point under any circumstances during stormy weather conditions. If you are unable to meet or arrange for your child to be met from their transport in stormy weather the school transport provider will deliver them into the care of a responsible adult or will return them to the school.
- If your child travels by public bus service, either as a season ticket holder or fare-paying passenger, you are responsible for their safety to and from the pick up/set down point and should meet them or arrange for them to be met. Please remember that it is not possible for public service vehicles to make special arrangements for individual passengers as they must follow a specified route and timetable.
- In adverse weather you may decide to make arrangements with the school to pick up your child directly from the school but you must not remove your child without first informing the school office.
- If you are in any doubt about whether it is safe to send your children to school then the advice that we would give you is don't – you know what the local conditions are like and are therefore in the best position to make the decision.
- It is vitally important that pupils know how to gain access to the family home. Parents/carers should ensure that the child knows how to access a house key if they are not already carrying one.

## **When Will Schools Be Closed?**

Head Teachers have the authority to decide if and when schools should close. Decisions are made on the basis of information received about prevailing or adverse weather conditions.

### **a) Closure **during** the school day**

The Head Teacher will consider whether pupils, on leaving school, will be able to reach the safety of their own homes or another acceptable place of safety.

The Council and Head Teacher also have a duty to ensure the safety of staff, so it may be necessary to send staff home due to adverse weather. This may result in the closure of the school if insufficient staff remain to supervise pupils safely.

On some occasions only part of the school may be closed or only some pupils dismissed and sent home early.

An email message will be sent out to parents/carers as soon as a decision has been made to close the school. On receipt of this message please do not attempt to contact the school office unless you need to inform the school of the need to use emergency contacts. The school office will be working to arrange transport and co-ordinate the safe evacuation of all pupils.

When the decision to close is made pupils are told they must report to the school office if they think there will be no one at home or if they will have difficulty gaining access to their home. Office staff will then contact parents/carers or emergency contact directly by telephone.

### **b) Closure **before** the start of the school day**

On some occasions information received about weather and road conditions may result in it being decided that the school will not open for the day.

Our aim is always to try and make a decision about whether or not to close the school before 7.30 am – we do however rely on advice from the Roads Department and local bus contractors, and sometimes this information is a little slow in coming to us. The large catchment area and the great variation in road conditions across the area can also make it difficult to reach an early decision. Information about closures are publicised via the school closure information services detailed above.

Parents/carers are advised to always check these sources of information on mornings when there is stormy weather or if bad weather is forecast. Pupils must never be sent to school if it is indicated that the school will be closed.

It will not always be possible to send an email message to parents/carers before the start of the school day and the most reliable source of information which will always be updated first is the Aberdeenshire Council website and the associated telephone number.

### **c) Delayed start to the school day**

Depending upon the weather forecast and advice from the Roads Department the decision to open the school to pupils an hour later *i.e.* 10am might be taken. This would mean that the school buses would run an hour later (feeder transport would not run) and the school day would start with registration at 10am and period 2 starting at 10:10. This would allow both pupils and staff to travel to the school during daylight with the roads department having more time to ensure that the roads have been cleared and gritted.

### **What might my child be missing?**

Some parents and pupils are often concerned that important examinations or work may be missed because the school is closed or conditions make it difficult to attend. Such concerns should not over-ride good judgement. The safety and welfare of your child must be a priority.

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

In the event of a closure pupils at home should use their Show My Homework account to allow them to catch up with any outstanding school work. Staff might also post suitable work to be carried out during the period of time that the school is closed.

## **Other Emergency Closures**

There may be occasions when it is necessary to close the school for other reasons e.g. power cuts, burst pipes or heating failures. The arrangements outlined above will also apply to closure of the school for all other emergency reasons.