



CLOSING THE SCHOOL

(INCLUDING EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS)

Introduction

This note, prepared by Plymouth City Council, offers advice to Head Teachers and Governing Bodies on the procedures to be adopted in the case of school closure, including due to severe weather conditions.

There is a duty on Governors and on the City Council to provide an educational service for children and young people. Decisions concerned with school closures are therefore most appropriately made school by school, reflecting local circumstances.

In the absence or unavailability of the head Teacher, the school should ensure that the pre-agreed nominee is familiar with this advice and can act on their behalf.

1. School closure (including extreme weather conditions)

In the event of School Closure, the Assistant Director of Services for Children and Young People (Lifelong Learning) will liaise with the Civil Protection Unit and the Emergency Services and other Council Departments, to offer advice to the School Emergency Management Team. If this advice is to recommend that schools in general close, this will be given out by local radio stations to help parents. Other local media will be asked to carry the same message.

2. Closure assessment criteria

Head Teachers, in consultation where practicable with their Chair of Governors, should assess the situation. In their assessment they should take account of:

- (a) The safety and the accessibility of the site and surrounding area
- (b) The availability of heat, light, power and water
- (c) Availability of staff
- (d) Availability of meals

3. Communication of decision

The decision of school closure should be taken at an appropriate time, and should allow for adequate communication of the decision to parents and pupils. Parents should be requested not to telephone the media as this may impede communication between schools and the radio station. In the event that weather conditions deteriorate overnight, the Head Teacher should liaise with their Site Services Officer/Caretaker, to check out the conditions against the above criteria. Head Teachers are requested to:

1. Inform the Assistant Director for Lifelong Learning on **307723** that you have made a decision to close your school.
2. Inform School Transport on **307537** if your school has closed so that the team can inform transport operators.
3. Use the template provided (attached) to email the school closures inbox and radio stations so that they may alert listeners about the closure of your school. This will involve sending information to the following:
 - Email to Plymouth City Council's school closures address. This is schools.closures@plymouth.gov.uk This will be the main source of information for updating the Council website and ensuring accuracy.
 - Other site users and any pre-arranged visitors

- Heart FM

Heart – 97.0 FM
Fax: 01392 354209
Tel: 01392 354230
Email: news.devon@heart.co.uk
devon.news@heart.co.uk

- BBC Radio Devon

BBC Radio Devon – 103.4 FM
Tel: 0845 3011034
Email: devonsnow@bbc.co.uk.

- Radio Cornwall

BBC Radio Cornwall – 95.2 FM
Tel: 01872 222222 or
01872 475263.
Email: radio.cornwall@bbc.co.uk

The information includes:

- Name and address of school
- The DCSF school code – this is a vital piece of information because the radio stations will not broadcast your message unless they are able to confirm its content and the process for this confirmation is through the use of the DCSF school code
- Your name and contact telephone number
- Brief details and the instructions or message that you would like relaying, including, if possible, expected date of reopening

4. For staff

If conditions prevent you getting to your school, then you should telephone your Head Teacher and say that you intend to remain at home but will be available for duty.

5. Special school transport

If conditions deteriorate during the school day, decisions made at school level should be made known to Assistant Director of Services for Children and Young People (Lifelong Learning), who will notify the School Transport Team to advise the transport providers. Equally, information from school transport providers will be shared with schools to enable local decisions to be taken.