



Walter Infant School and Nursery

SCHOOL CLOSURE IN THE EVENT OF SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS

This document expands upon Walter Infant School's Closure Policy.

1 Decision making

The Headteacher (or Deputy Head) is responsible for taking decisions to close the school.

A decision to close the school will be taken on welfare or safety grounds and will be supported by risk assessments regarding the situation on site. Risk assessments may consider the proportion of staff that are likely to be available, travel risks, risks on site, and risks due to reduced adult supervision levels and welfare facilities.

The minimum number of staff that must be present for school to open will be;

- 7 teaching staff
- 8 support staff;
- 3 members of the admin team (minimum);
- Site Controller
- 1 member of staff must be the Headteacher or Deputy.

This must include at least one first aid qualified staff. Ratios for F1 must be 1:13 (maximum 2 staff), ratios for F2 must be 1:15 (maximum 6 staff).

In the event of extreme weather conditions, staff who live beyond reasonable walking distance will not be expected to make the journey to school unless they feel confident that they can do so safely. They must inform the Headteacher of their decision as soon as possible.

In exceptional cases, the local authority may take a global decision to close schools, or to issue a direction to individual or groups of schools. This information will be forward to staff using their school email addresses or text.

Closure also refers to decisions to partially close or to amend the normal start/finish times of the school day.

School will remain closed unless access to the site is safe.

2 Consultation

Closure decisions will, wherever possible, be made in consultation with Chair of Governors and the Head teacher. A courtesy call must be made to the Head teacher of St. Paul's Junior School to inform them of the decision to close or stay open with a reduced compliment of staff; this will be done via text or telephone call to a private mobile number so that the school switchboard is not affected.

3 Notifying relevant parties of the decision

3.1 Related services

The Chair of Meadow Nursery and the Supervisor of the After School Club will be advised of the decision.

3.2 Wokingham Borough Council

In cases when an urgent decision has had to be made, the school is acting on advice issued by Children's Services, or a potential closure decision is confirmed, the Headteacher will notify Children's Services as soon as possible.

In the case of one-off situations or unforeseen emergencies, the Headteacher will advise Children's Services by telephone, giving reasons for the closure decision.

3.3 Staff

Staff will be notified of school closure by text at 7am each morning and they will be updated as to the situation on site and in the surrounding area each evening. Any

member of staff who is unable to reach school or is experiencing difficulties en route must inform the Head or Deputy.

3.4 Parents

Parents will be notified of school closure via information posted on the Learning Platform. Where possible, a letter will be sent out in advance of any possible predicted closure to prepare parents for the possibility of closure. We will also update the school's Facebook page as regularly as we can.

Where there is some doubt about the situation for the next working day, parents will be advised to

1. Check the school's website; or
2. Check the 'borough alert' section of the Council's website (which also provides other local information about emergencies); and
3. Listen to radio broadcasts as they regularly announce schools that are closed.
4. Check the Walter Infant School Facebook page.

Wherever possible, information about whether school meals will be available will also be included.

4 Off-site Activities

If there is an off-site activity scheduled to take place, a decision will be made by the Headteacher in conjunction with Children's Services as to whether the activity can go ahead.

5 Supporting learning from home

During a period of extended closure, consideration will be given to uploading work on to the Learning Platform for parents and pupils to access from home.

6 Extreme Weather

6.1 Ongoing

School will ensure that it has access to grit/salt and a system in place to spread that grit/salt in the event of severe winter weather.

6.2 In periods of extreme weather

6.2.1 Throughout the period of extreme weather, the Site Controller will check the site for frozen/burst water pipes as part of his opening responsibilities.

6.2.2 The responsibility for immediate routine gritting and emergency clearance of snow/ice on Site is the responsibility of the Site Controller and Headteacher.

6.2.3 Where additional manpower is required the Headteacher, alongside the Chair of Governors, will endeavour to arrange for a working party to assist in snow

clearance. When carrying out snow clearance, the DfT 'Snow Code' advice on snow clearance will be consulted.

- 6.2.4** As a general rule, a pathway of at least one meter wide will be cleared to provide access to the main entrance and across the playground to the link doors.
- 6.2.5** All cleared paths will be treated with rock salt & checked regularly for refreezing throughout the day.
- 6.2.6** Noticeboards will inform if areas are unsafe or out of bounds. Areas such as the playground equipment and Foundation garden will be taped off.

SCHOOL CLOSURE POLICY

I CONTEXT OF THE POLICY

On occasion, events may evolve which raise the concern for the health, safety and wellbeing of our pupils, staff and visitors to School. Such events may be related to extreme weather (eg snow or excessive heat), a serious problem with the school premises, (eg no heating or water), contagion (eg a 'flu epidemic) etc. In such events, the closure of the School may need to be considered.

II RELATED DOCUMENTS

School – Rainbow Plan
School – Health and Safety Policy
School – Unexpected School Closure Protocol
School – Emergency Evacuation Procedure
School – Hot Weather Protocol
School – Communicable Diseases Protocol
School – Broadmoor Hospital Escape Procedure
School – Lockdown Procedure
School – Visitors Policy

1 Underlying principle

The health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors is of paramount importance. It follows that if, following conducting a risk assessment, the Head Teacher reasonably considers that it is in the interests of health and safety to close the School, he/she will do so.

2 Risk Assessment

2.1 As part of the risk assessment, the Head Teacher will consult, where possible, with relevant parties. For further details see the School's Unexpected School Closure Protocol.

2.2 For the avoidance of any doubt:

2.2.1 Where events determine that an insufficient number of staff are able to attend the School to provide the correct level of care and safety for the pupils, the Head Teacher will close the school until such time that sufficient numbers of staff are in attendance.

2.2.2 The Head Teacher will take any direction issued by Wokingham Borough Council into account when reaching a decision to close the School.

3 Notification

In the event of deciding to close the School, the Head Teacher will notify Meadow Nursery, After School Club, Wokingham Borough Council, staff and parents following the Unexpected School Closure Procedure. The School will also use the emergency announcements offered by local radio set out in the Unexpected School Closure Protocol as well as, where possible, the School's internet site and email, to disseminate information about the School closure.