



Walter Infant School and Nursery

SCHOOL CLOSURE POLICY

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Action	By	Date
1	Approval	Environment Committee	
1	Approval	Full Governing Body	July 2010
2	Re-draft	Fiona Cross	October 2013
3	Re-draft	Judy Wheeler	January 2016
4	Approved	FGB	21 February 2018
5	Approved	Full Governing Body	23 rd February 2023

Next review date: **Spring 2026 (or earlier if required)**

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. Government recommendations are that the headteacher should do all he/she can to keep the school open during strike action.

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 to a safe place Procedures
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.

2.2.3 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 School Management Team

1 member of staff must be the Headteacher or Deputy.)

This is the equivalent to 19 staff (7 of which MUST be teachers).

We require at least one First Aider at work as well as 1 paediatric first aider per year group. 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 living 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.

Our current teaching team 2022 2023 does not have 7 teachers who are able to walk to school therefore we do not have capacity to open during dangerous weather conditions, such as snow and ice.

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.

3 **Strike Action**

Gov.uk Department for Education DfE states:

In the event of strike action, we expect headteachers and governing bodies to take all reasonable steps to keep schools open for as many pupils as possible. The guidance provides examples of approaches and flexibilities that can be used to maximise attendance and explains the law on trade disputes and picketing.

3.1 If the numbers of staff on strike means a school must temporarily prioritise places they should, where possible, apply the principles set out in the separate emergency planning and response guidance by giving priority to vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers.

- 3.2 In addition to prioritising vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers, schools should consider prioritising pupils due to take public examinations and other formal assessments.
- 3.3 Where schools must restrict attendance, they should consider, where possible, providing remote education in line with the [providing remote education: guidance for schools](#).

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.