

Emergency Closure Policy

July 2016

Review Date: July 2019

In the unlikely event that we have to close at times other than scheduled in the normal opening hours and dates, this policy is applied to ensure that all involved in the school have a clear understanding of the procedures which will take place.



Methods:***An emergency closure is implemented in the following circumstances:***

- When the building is unusable through accidental or malicious damage
- When the building is unusable due to required maintenance work. Where possible we will endeavour to negotiate scheduled work to be carried out during times of closure.
- When an outbreak of illness within the school requires closure in line with Health Protection Agency (HPA) and Ofsted guidelines.
- When illness levels within the staff body mean it is impossible to maintain the correct ratios of suitable adults to children.
- When severe weather conditions prevent staff from reaching the school safely and it is impossible to maintain the correct ratios of suitable adults to children.

In the event of any of the above incidents occurring which requires the school to not open on a given morning, the Head teacher or Deputy Head will make contact with the families of the pupils affected for that session in advance of the day where practical. Where this is not practical, a member of the management is asked to remain at the building until such time as it can be determined that all the affected families have been made aware of the situation.

The Head teacher is responsible for informing the relevant authorities of the unexpected closure. Initially this means informing the Alternative Learning and Progression Service Team, and Support, Challenge & Intervention teams. Other parties who may need to be informed are Ofsted, Health Protection Agency, and Local Health Authority, Health and Safety Executive and RIDDOR, depending on the circumstances of the closure.

Parents are informed about how they can find out when the school will re-open and other pertinent information according to the circumstances of the closure. This may include asking them to nominate a preferred contact number/email address, or holding a special meeting to keep parents informed. Information regarding closures are posted on the schools website, on the councils education website and where appropriate via local media and radio stations

File Ref: LM13***Policy statement on emergency closure:***

The decision to close the school rests with the Head teacher. In his absence the decision will fall to other Senior Staff. The school will only be closed as a last resort e.g. travelling becoming hazardous, or if school is not safe for students and staff

If the school cannot open because of the weather or other circumstances, staff will be contacted via text or telephone.

Parents/students will be notified via Radio and/or by personal telephone call and the school website.

Staff will be expected to come into school unless:

- You are told specifically not to do so by a member of the Leadership Group or your line manager;
- You live some distance from school and you deem it unsafe to travel. If the police advise that unnecessary travel should be avoided, car journeys should not be undertaken.

In the event of the school closing due to worsening weather conditions during the school day necessitating closure, we will give as much notice as possible. We will work together to ensure that these pupils get home safely. We will not allow pupils to leave the school site unless we are confident that parents are aware and approve of the arrangement.

Emergency closure after a session has started

In the event of an emergency closure after the session has started parents/carers will be informed by telephone that the pupils will be transported home as soon as possible. If the closure is due to sickness, the children and all staff who are unaffected remain on the premises until all children can be collected or transported.

If the closure is due to an emergency which requires the building to be evacuated, the children are safely evacuated according to the current Fire Drill procedures. Contact information for all the children is taken out of the building alongside the daily register. Once the building is evacuated, a member of the SMT ensures the relevant authorities/emergency services are called. The children are then taken to a place of safety until such time as they can all be collected by parents and carers or transport arranged home. A member of staff will contact the parents and carers of the children present. All staff remain with the children during this time.

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Emergency Closure Procedures (Bad Weather):

The local radio stations will NOT be maintaining school closure lists on their websites this winter and can not guarantee that they will be able to mention all schools on air.

Schools will endeavour to make a decision on closure by 7.30am, if a decision has not been taken the evening before. This decision will be communicated directly to the council as will any decision to either start late or finish early.

Parents and staff should go to www.luton.gov.uk/schoolclosures which will be the official list of the current state of play for all Luton schools.

Information will also go onto the school website www.avenuecentre.co.uk

We will endeavour to contact staff and parents by phone / text as a back up measure.

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To All Staff

Re:Winter Weather School Closures

Heart Radio and BBC three counties radio have both decided that they will no longer add a list of school closures to their websites this winter, but they will try and read lists of school names out if there is time.

To check if the **Avenue Centre** is partially open, closing early or is closed then you must check the website www.luton.gov.uk/schoolclosures.

The evening before bad weather is expected, all schools will be listed as 'to be confirmed'. This means that parents / students will need to check the website the following morning for any overnight updates.

The school will email the website by 7.30am to have it's arrangements updated. Parents / students will need to check the website after this time for the latest official news.

There will also be a link to the school's website where the school can make further information available.

Chris Day
Head of Centre

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