



**H**appiness and Health  
**E**steem and Expectations  
**A**chievement and Attitudes  
**R**esponsibility and Respect  
**T**ruth and Teamwork  
**S**pirituality and Service



## **WATERMAN PRIMARY SCHOOL** **ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the event of bad weather, it is always the school's priority to remain open and as such the site team will work to ensure that the site is both accessible and safe. There are however rare instances where the school might not be able to open as normal as a result of severe weather.

The decision to close the school either before or during the school day will be made by the Head Teacher. The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

1. Insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely.
2. Conditions on site are dangerous
3. Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous for travel.

If the school is to close

1. The closure will be recorded on the Essex County Council Website (see Appendix 1). This information will be displayed to the public via the schools directory <http://www.essex.gov.uk/education-schools/schools/dates/pages/emergency-school-closures.aspx>
2. The site manager will alert the media (Heart Essex, BBC Essex and Southend Radio) who will then broadcast details.
3. Parents will be alerted to the closure using the text service activated by the Head Teacher once the closure has been logged with the County Council.
4. The school website will display a message

The school will make all practicable efforts to keep parents informed as to the situation with the school during adverse weather conditions, as we appreciate that such conditions and the uncertainty places very considerable difficulties upon parents. However, parents are expected to check the website and/or make themselves aware of the radio broadcasts when it is clear that a closure is a possibility.

The school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal; parents should endeavour to contact the school to let them know they are on their way if likely to be delayed. The school recognises there will be isolated instances where families are cut off, even where the clear majority of children can get into school. In such instances parents should inform the school of the circumstances of this exceptional situation, as the school has a duty to clarify the circumstances of each case so as to be able to formally authorise the absence to the Local Authority. Parents acting on the assumption that the school would be closed without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevents the child coming into school risks their child being registered as an un-authorised absence.

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorized absence.

In the event of the school having to close during the day due to unforeseen worsening weather or similar unforeseen circumstances, parents will be contacted by phone either at home or work and asked to collect their child/ren. Such an early release will only be contemplated in very extreme circumstances.

In the event of snow, the main pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents, children and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. Children will also be reminded of this in assembly.

The school advises all pupils, staff and visitors to wrap up warmly and wear sensible footwear. We suggest that children wear wellington boots or sturdy shoes to school as we will also ensure that the fall of snow allows for learning opportunities to be developed during the school day.

Before and after school opening hours' parents are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide on the school playground.

Where necessary, essential pathways will be maintained as clear as possible throughout the day.

On school days where the school is closed to pupils, the pathway will still be maintained during snow and ice weather on a daily basis by the site manager, so as to keep the pathways clear and prevent buildup of ice and snow.

During adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out of bounds to the children at break times and break will be indoors.

In the Head Teacher's absence, the Senior teacher on site will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to the Adverse Weather Policy.

### **MONITORING THIS POLICY**

The Headteacher will monitor the application of this Policy and take appropriate steps to ensure that it is operating effectively.

The policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body on an annual basis to ensure its effective application and any issues arising will be raised on the School Development Plan and tracked accordingly.

Adopted by Governing Body	October 2015
Review Date	

Chair of Governors..... Date .....

Headteacher ..... Date .....

## **Guidance on a Temporary School Closure**

### **Introduction**

Closures related to severe weather, site issues or exceptional circumstances should be **reported via the notification box on the secure area of [Essex Schools Infolink](#)**. Schools are no longer required to contact the Schools Communication Team.

### **How does the notification system work?**

Your school submits a notification via the secure area on Essex Schools Infolink. Once a notification is submitted it is instantly displayed on the Emergency Closures page on the Essex County Council website. You can submit a notification either on the day or the day before the closure. Closures for the next day will only display from 6pm the day before. Closures can be submitted by any colleague with secure access with a valid username and password. It is recommended to arrange a process with colleagues so that only one notification is submitted and that colleagues have access to their log in details at home and at work. Once a closure is submitted it is difficult to remove it from the Essex County Council website – please take care when submitting a notification to ensure it is correct.

### **Who should decide whether to close the school?**

The County as a whole can experience severe or exceptional weather from time to time, though conditions can vary considerably from one area to another and for this reason the responsibility for decisions about an individual school's organisation on any particular day rests with the Headteacher. The Local Authority does not 'approve' temporary closure of individual schools.

Whilst schools should only be closed as a last resort (on grounds of severe weather or for other serious reasons, such as a funeral), it is for the Headteacher to decide whether or not to close the school, having due regard for health and safety considerations, as well as the implications for parents who may have to arrange childcare. Schools are expected to be open for pupils on 190 days each year.

The Head may wish to discuss the situation with the Chair of Governors, especially where the proposed closure is decided in advance.

### **Where should I direct parents so they know my school is closed?**

Parents can see the full list of closures on the Essex County Council website. The page can be accessed using the below link and path:

Website Link - <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Dates/Pages/Emergency-School-Closures.aspx>

Path – Visit Essex County Council's homepage at [www.essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk) and search for Emergency School Closures or click in to the Education and Schools area, click Schools, click Dates and click Emergency Closures.

The Emergency Closures page will update as and when notifications are received, therefore it is recommended to continue to check or refresh the page.

For any further queries or concerns please contact the Schools Communication Team on 01245 434745 or by email [schools.communication@essex.gov.uk](mailto:schools.communication@essex.gov.uk)