



## **Thomas Bewick School Policy for Adverse Weather Conditions (including School Closures) 2018-20**

It is the policy of the school to make every effort to remain open whenever possible. The school will monitor potential developments of severe weather during the winter and make the necessary arrangements to ensure the school remains open. The decision to close the school, either before or during the school day, will be made by the Head Teacher and will be based on dynamic risk assessment. The Head Teacher will monitor and assess the situation regularly in order to be able to re-open the school as soon as it is safe to do so.

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 staff or pupils to travel;
4. the capacity of pupil transport to deliver/collect pupils and access them safely to the school site;
5. inadequate numbers of familiar staff to work with pupils attending school - staff knowledge of those pupils able to attend.

If the school is to close:

1. the Head Teacher will inform the Chair of Governors of the closure decision;
2. school will use its own communication channels to inform parents/carers and staff of the closure and will inform the Local Authority by emailing the School Closures contact of the closure and re-opening details;
3. parents/carers and staff will be alerted to the closure through the SIMS text service or email – this will be authorised by the Head Teacher;
4. the closure and updates will be informed to parents via the school website – [www.thomasbewick.newcastle.sch.uk](http://www.thomasbewick.newcastle.sch.uk) and Facebook.

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 Facebook and/or make themselves aware of the radio broadcasts when it is clear that closure is a possibility. The Council Communication Team will collate information about citywide impact of school closures and support schools by sharing school information through the Council's social media

channels where possible. Council information about school closures can be accessed through the Council's Facebook page.

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 they are 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 in order 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 risk their child being registered as an unauthorised absence.

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorised 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 either collect their child or ensure that there is someone at home to receive them from School Transport. Such an early release will only be contemplated in very extreme circumstances.

In the event of snow some pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents, children and visitors should be aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. Children will also be reminded of this in assembly. On the primary site the plan for clearing areas of the site is the responsibility of the Facilities Management Company. The basis of this plan is that main walkways onto and around the site and the main route through the car park for buses, taxis will be cleared by 8.00 am, the rest of the car park will be cleared across the day. On the secondary site the responsibility lies with the school caretaker and the Studio West caretaker.

During adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out of bounds to children and staff will be informed of this during each day.

In the Head Teacher's absence the senior member of staff on site will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to the Adverse Weather Policy.

While this policy is aimed at adverse weather conditions, there are other potential reasons for unplanned closure. These can include:

- central heating failure;
- interruption of water supply;
- significant structural damage.

The procedure for dealing with unplanned closures for any reason other than adverse weather conditions will remain as stated within this policy.

Links to other policies/documents

- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk and Continuity Plan
- Attendance Policy

<b>Revision Record of Published Versions</b>			
<b>Author</b>	<b>Creation Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Status</b>
JMc/DS	May 2013	1.0	Approved by Premises Committee
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JMc	November 2015	1.0	Approved by Premises Committee 09/11/15
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