



**BRIZE NORTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**Adverse Weather Policy**



<b>Review Date Planned</b>	<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Date adopted by Governing Body</b>
		21st March 2019
March 2022		

**1. CONTEXT**

- 1.1. It is the expectation of ODST Trustees that all of its schools will make every effort to remain open whenever possible.
  
- 1.2. If the school is anticipating closure either at the beginning of the school day or during the school day, ODST expects the Headteacher to consult, wherever possible, with the Chair of Governors before any decision to close the School is made. The decision to close is a local one and will be made by leaders on site at the time who are best placed to evaluate the risks to pupils, staff and visitors. The decision should be based on access to essential services (heating, water etc.), staffing levels, transport safety, and site safety.
  
- 1.3. The school may be closed if
  - insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely;
  - weather conditions mean that travel to school is too hazardous;
  - conditions on site are dangerous;
  - where weather conditions are advised to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous for travel.
  
- 1.4. If any school is anticipated to be closed for a significant period of time, then ODST would expect teachers to set work to be completed at home. Schools should make use of school websites and other resources to help parents to access such work.

**2. PROCEDURES**

- 2.1. The Health and Safety of children, parents and staff are paramount when taking any decision.
  
- 2.2. If the school is to consider closure trustees would expect:
  - Local Governing Bodies to have considered the basic entitlement of 190 ‘pupil days’ which should be offered if at all possible;
  - Consideration had been given to closing the school to just some year groups and/or changing the opening and closing time to avoid complete closure;
  - Restricting access to the site/buildings as an alternative to complete closure;
  - Offering a reduced curriculum provision as an alternative to closure.

- 2.3. If the decision is made to close Trustees would expect this decision to be communicated in a timely way as possible to limit staff and parent risks in attempting to travel to the school site. Trustees would also expect:
- families to be informed via e-mail/text message through the individual school's texting/email services or other methods of communicating across parent groups;
  - the closure to be made clear on the school's website;
  - staff to be informed by text message and the closure will be made clear on the school's website
  - any before school/Breakfast Club staff and School meal providers to be included in the above;
  - schools to inform their home local authority through the individual LA reporting arrangements and through local media outlets as set out in LA guidance;
  - schools to inform ODST senior officers using mobile phone numbers listed in the ODST Emergency Procedures;
  - Headteachers to ensure that governors are kept informed of school closures so that they can support the decision;
  - where possible, closure signs to be displayed at the entrance to the school.
- 2.4. The text messaging service should be accessible through the internet so that, if school leaders are unable to get to their place of work, messages can be sent from alternative locations, e.g. from home.
- 2.5. Thought should be given to the additional need for office cover to manage increased volumes of parental contact either in person, by phone or email so that timely responses can be given to enquiries about school closures or other adverse weather conditions. Governors should also give thought to the training for such staff to ensure they are clear about the school's policies and procedures so they provide accurate and safe information.

### **3. PARENT RESPONSIBILITY AND ABSENCE REPORTING.**

- 3.1. ODST appreciates that such conditions and the uncertainty places very considerable difficulties upon parents. It would urge its schools to make all practicable efforts to keep parents informed as to the situation with the school during adverse weather conditions. This is particularly important with advising on the reopening of the site for all or some pupils.
- 3.2. There is an expectation for parents to contact the school before setting out if they have a reasonable expectation that the adverse weather conditions might reasonably cause the School to be closed. Parents should be reassured that pupils will not be criticised if this creates a slight delay in arrival and that the school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal. However, school policies and communication with parents should make clear they should endeavour to contact the school to let staff know if pupils are on their way and likely to be delayed so that individual pupils are safeguarded on their journey.
- 3.3. ODST recognises there will be isolated instances where families may be cut off, even where the clear majority of children can get into school. In such instances school policies should note that 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. 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.

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

#### **4. CLOSURE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

4.1. 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 either at home or work to note the deteriorating conditions and asked for the early collect of their child/ren.

4.2. Children will be supervised until a parent/carer is able to collect them. If staff are anxious to leave because of the deteriorating situation, the headteacher will bear in mind these ratios before allowing staff to leave, taking into consideration staff members' personal circumstances in judging which staff members may leave first.

4.3. Local procedures should inform parents that the school will remain open until the end of the school day. It should also ensure parents who are delayed due to the adverse weather conditions, know they should contact the school as soon as possible to give an anticipated arrival time.

4.4. Parental requests for an early release for pupils should only be contemplated in very extreme circumstances, e.g. extreme weather conditions, failure of heating/water systems.

#### **5. SNOW CLEARING AND SALTING**

5.1. In the event of snow, a path through the playground will be cleared and salted. Parents, children and visitors should be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, may remain dangerous. Children should also be reminded of this in assembly and by school staff.

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

#### **6. HOT AND OTHER EXTREME WEATHER**

6.1. In the event of the weather being hotter than usual:

- parents have responsibility for ensuring the School is informed of their children's susceptibility to the sun.
- pupils will be encouraged to drink regularly including having access to sources of drinking water to fill bottles throughout the day
- parents are encouraged to provide hats in hot weather to wear outdoors.
- Staff may decide to hold indoor breaks and curtail outdoor PE sessions. If necessary, outdoor PE sessions and sports events may be cancelled. In these circumstances, parents will be informed as soon as possible.

- The expectation is that sun cream is applied at home before school. Parents are encouraged to send children in with spray-on sun cream which children can apply themselves. Staff will only apply sun cream with the permission of individual parents, and this is not done routinely but only on special occasions.

## **7. LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### 7.1. Oxfordshire

<http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/schools/files/folders/folders/documents/schoolorganisationplanning/EmergencyClosureProcedure.pdf>