

# St Patrick's Primary School, Drumgreenagh

## Severe Weather Guidance: 2023/2024



### **Introduction**

Within the limitations set out by statutory guidance and health and safety legislation and wherever possible, St Patrick's Primary School, will remain open during the school day to deliver education to its pupils. However, the Principal is authorised to make an emergency closure when exceptional circumstances make it absolutely necessary and in the best interests of the pupil.

### **Closure of the school**

The following will be considered in coming to any decision to close Saint Patrick's Primary School for exceptional reasons. These include:

### **Health and safety requirements**

- Can pupils and staff access the school buildings safely?
- Can pupils and staff be evacuated in an emergency?
- Is the area designated for disembarking from transport safe for pupils?

### **People/teacher ratios**

- if a limited number of staff and pupils can hand, is the P TR acceptable?  
(1 adult: 30 pupils)

### **Weather and Road Conditions**

The Principal will conduct a risk assessment, taking into account whether local weather forecasts and road conditions, including those areas from which staff will be travelling, are safe.

The decision to close the school will be made, where possible, before 8.00am taking into account weather reports from media outlets, the Met Office and PSNI, supplemented by on-the-spot observation, either personally or from staff members better placed to make such observations.

### **In the event of the school being closed due to Adverse Weather Conditions**

If the school is to be closed, it is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that:

- Parents/guardians are contacted using the school text messaging service;
- staff are contacted using the school's text messaging service.
- the information is passed to relevant media agencies as soon as possible, i.e., BBC NI
- The EA and the Department of Education will be informed as soon as possible of the closure.

### **Closure during the school day**

It may be necessary for the school to close during the school day, i.e. if the weather is deteriorating and there is doubt as to whether the children can return home safely later in the day. In such cases the staff will dismiss the children directly into the care of a parent/ guardian. Staff will contact parents/guardians via the following methods:

- C2K Text Messaging Service, website alerts and emails
- A telephone not connected to the network will be available in school for use in the event of a power outage.
- Having received the school closure message, parents/guardians are to arrange collection of their children from school as soon as possible.
- The school will make contact by telephone with parents/guardians of those pupils who have not been collected and whose parents/guardians have not contacted the school regarding a delay

### **Safeguarding precautions on closure**

- Pupils will not be allowed to leave the school grounds unless the school knows that an identified adult will be available to supervise him/ her at the destination.
- It may be that a parent/guardian who collects his/ her children offers to provide shelter to other children whose parent/guardian is unable to get to the school. The school will not release children into the care of anyone other than the designated adult without first obtaining permission from the child's parent/ guardian.
- Adequate supervision will be provided for those children who cannot travel home immediately and therefore have to remain at school until the official closing time.

### **Travel to and from school**

- Parents/ guardians should be aware that it is their responsibility to make sensible decisions on behalf of their children when weather conditions are severe. Parents/ guardians are responsible for their safety of their children when they are travelling to and from school.

### **Emergency Contacts**

Pupil contact details are stored on SIMS, these details are linked to the school text message service. A hard copy of the data collection sheets is stored in Mrs O'Hare's office. Parents/guardians must provide the school with a current emergency number.

Data collection forms are distributed annually to new Primary One pupils, this information is recorded on SIMS. Contact information for P2-7 children is recorded on SIMS and updated at the start of each school year. A reminder to parents/guardians to update their telephone contact details is sent out at the beginning of the second term.

### **Staff Attendance**

Although it is recognised that severe weather conditions may make it difficult for staff to travel to and from work, unless advised to the contrary by the Principal, staff are expected that staff to present for work. EA contract staff (catering and cleaning services) will also be advised of emergency requirements with respect to travel arrangements.

### **Clearance of Snow**

The school is responsible for the clearance of approach paths to the school building within the school site. This is this specific responsibility of the Building Supervisor. When severe weather is forecast the Building Supervisor will be tasked to lay salt and grit before the pupils' arrival. The school is not responsible for the clearance of the public road network.

### **Children's Play Times**

If there is any doubt about the children's safety in the playground, the children will remain indoors at break and lunchtime

### **Services**

Service providers who will be affected by the school closure will be informed as soon as possible, after families and staff have been contacted.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The Principal will monitor the implementation of this policy. The severe weather policy for Saint Patrick's Primary School, Drumgreenagh will be evaluated and reviewed in line with Department of Education Guidelines/ Reports and in keeping with any additional practises and procedures.

