

# Tempo

## Primary School



### EMERGENCY CLOSURE POLICY

*October 2024*

## INTRODUCTION

Within the limitations set out by statutory guidance and health and safety legislation and wherever possible, Tempo Primary School will remain open during the school day to deliver education to its pupils. This statement supports the school's aspiration to deliver the highest quality educational provision 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 pupils.

## CLOSURE OF THE SCHOOL

The following will be considered in coming to any decision to close Tempo Primary School for exceptional reasons (Appendix 1). These include:

- Health and safety requirements
  - ✓ Can pupils and staff access the school building safely?
  - ✓ Can pupils and staff be evacuated in an emergency?
  - ✓ In an emergency, could the Emergency Services access the school?
  - ✓ Is the area designated for disembarkation from transport safe for pupils?
- Pupil/ Teacher ratios
  - ✓ If a limited number of staff and pupils can attend, is the PTR acceptable? (1 teacher: 30 pupils)
- Weather and road conditions
  - ✓ Have local weather forecasts and road conditions, including those for areas from which staff will be travelling, been considered?

The principal will carry out a risk assessment (Appendix 2) in consultation with the Chair of Governors or if she is unavailable the Vice Chair and members of staff. The decision will be made where possible before 7.30am and on the basis of information received from the media about weather, supplemented by on the spot observation, either personally or from staff members better placed to make such observations and through appropriate external agencies such as the Met Office and PSNI (Appendix 3).

## **CLOSURE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

On occasions it may be necessary for school to close during the school day i.e. if the weather is deteriorating and there is doubt as to whether children can return home safely later in the day or due to health and safety considerations. In such cases the school will ensure that children are collected from school.

## **IN THE EVENT OF SCHOOL BEING CLOSED**

If school is closed it is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the following events happen:

- The decision is ratified with the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors.
- Parents are contacted using the school's text messaging service.
- The EA and the Department of Education will be informed as soon as possible of the closure.
- Staff and/or a notice will be posted at the school gates to help prevent pupils from being left by parents at the start of the school day if possible. In instances of severe weather, parents should monitor the nominated phone for text contact.
- School is appropriately staffed by teachers/classroom assistants to deal with any pupils who arrive at school unescorted until parents or emergency contacts can collect the pupils.

These tasks do not all have to be completed by the principal, although she has the overall responsibility for ensuring each has been carried out.

## **SAFEGUARDING PRECAUTIONS ON CLOSURE**

No pupil will be allowed to leave school unless the school is aware that an identified adult will be available to supervise him/her at their destination. It may be that a parent who collects his/her children offers to give shelter to other children. The agreement of the parents of these children must be given before pupils are released in this way. We will ensure that adequate supervision by members of teaching staff will be made of those pupils who cannot go home or to their emergency destination immediately and have therefore to remain at school.

## **TRAVEL TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

Parents should be aware that it is their responsibility to make sensible decisions on behalf of their children when weather conditions are severe.

Parents are responsible for the safety of their children to and from the school.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACTS**

Parents must give the schools an emergency contact point. Data Collection forms are sent out annually in September to all parents. Parents are required to complete and return the forms promptly. If the forms are not returned the previous year's form will be annotated as such and kept on file. Information on emergency contacts and instructions in respect of each pupil will be held centrally in the emergency contacts folder held in the school office.

**It is essential that parents keep the school up to date with any change in their contact details.**

## **STAFF ATTENDANCE**

Although it is recognised that severe weather conditions make it difficult for staff to get to and from work, unless advised to the contrary by the Principal, then the expectation is that staff will present themselves for work. EA Contract Staff (Catering and Cleaning Services) also need to be advised of any emergency requirements.

## **CLEARANCE OF SNOW**

Within the school site, the school is responsible for snow clearance and the clearing of approach paths is the specific task of the caretaker. When severe weather is forecast, the caretaker should be tasked to lay salt and grit on arrival. The clearance of public roads is the responsibility of the Roads Service.

## **CHILDREN'S PLAYTIMES**

If there is any question of children's safety being at risk during break time and lunchtime where the playground area is deemed unsafe, school has a responsibility in inclement weather to keep the children indoors.

## **SERVICES**

All of the service providers who will be affected by the closure will be informed as soon as possible, once families and staff have contacted.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Principal will monitor implementation of this policy. Tempo Primary Emergency School Closure Policy will be evaluated and reviewed in line with any new Department of Education Guidelines / Reports and in keeping with any additional practices and procedures.