

## **EMERGENCY CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS**

From time to time circumstances arise which can lead to the emergency closure of schools or other educational establishments. Examples of such circumstances include severely inclement weather, abnormal temperatures, burst pipes, disruption of fuel, power or water supplies or any other unforeseen circumstances. The length of closure may vary from an early closure for a brief period with a return to normal working on the following day to a closure for one or more full days. Parents should be advised by letter and through standard advice in the school handbook, that there may be occasions when emergencies make it necessary for pupils to be sent home prematurely and that parents should have advised their children of where they should go (in these circumstances).

### **EARLY CLOSURE**

- 1 Early closure should be considered only when the circumstances are such that it is impossible to continue to make reasonable provision for pupils. Heads of establishments should make every effort to provide education for as long as possible and for as many pupils as possible. Consideration should be given where feasible to partial rather than full closure.
- 2 When considering early closure, heads of establishments should regard the health and welfare of pupils as paramount. All arrangements should ensure a standard of care for each and every pupil as would be expected of a prudent parent. Arrangements should take account of age, ability and capacities (physical and mental) of the pupils concerned; the location of the school in relation to pupils' homes and to road traffic and other hazards; the home circumstances of the pupils and any other emergency arrangements.

No pupils should be sent home without ensuring that an adult's presence is available. In the absence of parent/carer acknowledgement or consent to the amended time of dismissal, or acceptance of responsibility for the reception of the pupil by an adult nominated by the parent as an emergency contact point, supervision and care will have to be provided in the school or establishment until such arrangements are made or until normal dismissal time.

If early closure is being considered because of abnormal temperatures Appendix A to this manual should be consulted.

### **Action Required**

If after considering all of the above factors, the head of establishment still feels that there is no alternative to early closure, the education office should be consulted in advance other than in the most exceptional circumstances. If the head of establishment is not in school or is unavailable to take a decision on closure, a deputy head teacher or a person nominated by the head of establishment should take this responsibility and follow the procedure here in. Where it has been agreed that the proposed early closure should take place the head teacher should take the following action.

1. Any alterations to transport arrangements should be agreed with the operators. (See Appendix B)
2. Where appropriate, arrangements should be made to provide school meals as on a normal day.
3. If the school operates with a nursery or any other support function e.g. a specialist unit, advise the Head of Education of the closure so that any alternative arrangements, if necessary, can be put in place.
4. Advise any after school care scheme which involves children at the school.
5. A note should be sent home to parents informing them of the reason for closure and when pupils should return to school. If contact with the media is required the appropriate action will be taken by the education office on receipt of information from the school.
6. Head teachers normally should not make direct contact with the media or with Corporate Communications.
7. Consideration should be given to the health and welfare of staff, though the authority expects staff to remain in school wherever possible. In all cases every effort should be made to retain during normal school hours a nucleus of staff including senior staff to look after children for whom alternative arrangements cannot be made, to deal with enquiries and to maintain contact with the education office.
8. An early closure for pupils does not necessarily mean an early closure for staff.

### **FULL DAY OR EXTENDED CLOSURE**

1. In more extreme circumstances than those which might lead to only an early closure it may be necessary to consider the closure of a school or establishment for one or more days.
2. The possibility of a full day or extended closure can arise when emergencies such as fire, burst pipes, heating or power failure occur outwith normal hours with the result that unless immediate remedial action is taken the school or establishment will be unable to open.

- 3 In such cases it is essential that immediately the emergency is discovered contact is made with the appropriate Development and Infrastructure staff. This contact would normally be made by the site coordinator or the head of establishment. Heads and site coordinators should keep emergency telephone numbers for contacting the appropriate Development and Infrastructure personnel readily available. If Development and Infrastructure are unable to take steps to allow the school or establishment to open they will contact the responsible member of the education directorate or other nominated officer who will agree with the head of establishment what action will be taken in accordance with the procedures outlined in section 7 below.
- 4 Closure for one or more days may also require to be considered in situations such as abnormally severe weather conditions or disruption to fuel supplies. Such circumstances could affect a few establishments at the same time.
- 5 It is possible that some emergency situations such as fuel shortages can be anticipated and that their effect can be minimised by careful forward planning. Heads of establishments are asked to undertake contingency planning to meet such emergencies and to review these plans each session.
- 6 Where large numbers of establishments are affected emergency teams will be established at the education office. These teams will co-ordinate efforts to re- open schools and establishments and to keep all interested parties informed. The office and mobile telephone numbers of the education emergency team are recorded in Appendix C.
- 7 The role of the head of establishment in ensuring that disruption to education is kept to a minimum will, however, be crucial and when faced with serious emergency situations of whatever nature which might lead to closure of the establishment, heads should note the relevant sections of the following procedures.

**(i) Disruption to Fuel Supplies**

Heating and fuel levels should be monitored to ensure that existing stocks are being used sensibly and that early and accurate information about fuel levels can be given to the education office. It is likely that requests for information about existing supplies and future needs will be made to schools as soon as there is any indication of an emergency situation arising.

Heads of establishments should ensure that the appropriate personnel are aware of the ordering arrangements for fuel which are currently in operation.

Should a situation arise whereby there is a likelihood of a shortfall in fuel supplies, and that further supplies cannot be secured in time, the head of establishment should advise the education office and area technical adviser immediately.

Maximum use should be made of any part of the establishment heated by a fuel which is not in short supply. In some cases it may be possible to provide alternative forms of heating to accommodate staff or part of the establishment population.

**(ii) Access to Schools**

Site coordinators must keep stocks of salt and gritting material available. As soon as treacherous conditions develop, gritting and/or salt scattering should be carried out.

Heads of establishments should check that access for fuel deliveries and for pupils and staff is not made impossible by snow or ice. Where the site coordinator is unable to keep access open the education office should be informed without delay.

**(iii) Communication with parents**

Heads of establishments should consider how best to ensure good communication with parents. Heads should make every effort to advise parents in writing of the reasons for closure and indicate the methods by which they will be informed of the date for the re-opening of the establishment. These methods will normally include local radio and the press. Heads of establishments, however, should not make direct contact with the media or with Corporate Communications. Arrangements for this will be made through the education office. Heads should also inform parents of the establishment telephone number and where possible, the hours during which parents may telephone the establishment for information.

In large scale emergencies other sources of information such as an answer phone service may be provided by the education office emergency team. Heads of establishments will be informed of any additional services to be provided.

The importance of good communication with parents and the general public cannot be over-emphasised and heads should use every means at their disposal (e.g. notices in local shops, announcements in churches etc) to ensure that the community is aware of the up to date situation at the school.

It is essential that heads of establishments regularly update information about pupil emergency contacts as part of a school/establishment communication policy.

**(iv) Attendance of Staff**

The arrangements for staff attendance will depend on the situation in each establishment. While the welfare of pupils and the requirement to maintain the maximum possible educational service remain paramount, responsible consideration must be given to the welfare of staff. Where conditions allow, staff should be asked to attend and work as normal a day as possible. It is important that teaching and non-teaching staff be treated equitably. Where it is impracticable for all members of staff to attend, a nucleus of staff should be at the establishment during normal working hours to deal with enquiries and maintain contact with the education office. At the very least every effort should be made to ensure the presence of a senior member of the teaching staff and facilities management staff. If it is not possible for the switchboard to be manned or for the establishment to receive or make telephone calls, telephone numbers at which the head or his/her representative and a member of the facilities management staff can be contacted should be provided to the education office.

As part of the establishments contingency plan heads of establishments should consider how staff who are not expected to attend or who for some reason are prevented from attending can best be kept in touch with the day to day position at the establishment. If a journey to their place of work is totally impracticable staff are expected, as a last resort, to report to their nearest authority school which is open (check before making your journey). If this cannot be achieved staff will not generally receive pay for that day, although individual cases will be considered on their own merit. Consideration may also be given for appropriate mechanisms to reimburse the Council for time lost (e.g. annual / flexi leave / working back time). In all cases staff should contact their line manager – as soon as possible regarding their situation and intention.

Please note photographic East Dunbartonshire Council identification must be shown when reporting for work at an establishment other than the normal place of work.

**(v) Transport**

Heads of establishments should maintain close contact with transport operators about the needs of the establishment. (See Appendix B)

**(vi) Contact with the Education Office**

It is essential that the education office be kept fully informed of the up-to-date situation in each establishment. Heads or their representatives should telephone daily to report their position. Such calls must be made before 10.00am and the information provided will form the basis of any report to be passed to the media. In large scale emergencies additional lines or an answer phone service will be provided to ease communication between establishments and the education office. Heads of establishments should also inform the education office in writing of the course of action taken.

**(vii) School Meals**

Where possible arrangements should be made to make school meals available at least to those who are entitled to free meals. It may be possible to make arrangements for meals to be provided in a neighbouring school if the need arises. Special arrangements should be considered particularly in areas of need.

**(viii) Alternative Accommodation**

If the emergency situation appears likely to last for more than a day or two, heads of establishments should consult the education office on the use of alternative accommodation for staff and for pupils such as neighbouring schools, church halls or other suitable buildings. Where necessary ex gratia payments will be made after the emergency is over for the use of buildings. Additional transport costs will also be met by agreement with the education office.

In the case of secondary schools it will be particularly important to make alternative arrangements for senior pupils.

The use of alternative accommodation is a matter which heads may wish to keep under constant review so that possible options are already known in advance of emergency situations arising.

**(ix) School Lets**

Heads of establishments must keep Community Services (School Letting Office) up-to-date on the situation at the establishment. It may be possible for the Letting Section to relocate lets in alternative accommodation in accordance with any guidance which is issued at the time of the emergency.

## **GENERAL POINTS**

1. After an emergency closure of whatever length heads should confirm in writing to the education office, the action which was taken. The report should include:

- (i) the dates on which the school was affected and why,
- (ii) whether the closure was full or partial,
- (iii) dates and times when staff were dismissed before normal hours,
- (iv) any alternative arrangements to accommodate staff or pupils,
- (v) any alterations to normal travel arrangements,
- (vi) days on which meals were not supplied,
- (vii) any special initiatives taken, and
- (viii) any specific problems experienced.

2. **Recording of Attendance**

Details of procedures for recording attendance in emergency situations are given in Procedure Manual No 3/08.

3. **Log Book**

The decision to close in emergency situations and the action taken should be noted in the schools log book or other official record.

The maintenance of as full an educational service as possible in times of emergencies and the interests of pupils should be your first consideration. Heads of establishments and their staff have in the past shown considerable initiative and made great efforts to keep schools and establishments open in the face of adverse circumstances and it is hoped that the terms of this manual will allow the emergency procedures to operate quickly and efficiently.

To assist heads of establishments a list of the technical advisers is attached as Appendix D.

Procedures to be followed in the event of an early closure of an establishment for reasons other than in an emergency are outlined in Procedure Manual No 3/10.

## EMERGENCY CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

### ABNORMAL TEMPERATURES

1. School heating systems are designed to standards which should ensure that room temperatures reach the levels indicated below when the outside air temperature is at freezing point.

<u>Type of Accommodation</u>	<u>Temperatures</u>	
Medical inspection room, changing room, bathroom, water closet and shower room	18½°C	(65°F)
Teaching space, dining room, nursery room, common room and staff room and school office	17°C	(62°F)
Assembly area, lecture hall, theatre and cinema	15½°C	(60°F)
Sickroom	14½°C	(58°F)
Cloakroom and corridors	13°C	(55°F)
Gymnasia	13°C	(55°F)
Games Hall	13°C	(55°F)

2. On the relatively infrequent occasions when outside temperatures are below freezing point in the morning - and the indoor temperature is correspondingly lower - this should not in itself be regarded as a reason for sending pupils home. Normally temperatures will rise during daylight hours.
3. Where there is a complete breakdown in the heating system or where the temperatures have not risen to those indicated in the above table by one hour after the start of the school day, heads of establishment should inform the appropriate officer of the Assets & Property Services department of the fault (if the site coordinator has not already done so) and should then act in accordance with this manual.
4. From time to time the temperatures in some parts of the establishment may rise above a maximum tolerable temperature limit. Temperature in itself is not an index of discomfort but other factors such as humidity, radiation, ventilation and length of exposure must be considered.



Where teaching staff have taken in advance of the situation, which can normally be anticipated, all reasonable precautions such as opening windows and doors, drawing curtains or blinds where available, it is recommended that when a temperature of 27°C (80°F), in the shade, has been experienced for a minimum of one hour, pupils and staff should be withdrawn from that room. If the temperature rises considerably in excess of 27°C, evacuation should take place within a shorter period.

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**PROVISION OF SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

The following arrangements, which have been agreed with the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, should be implemented whenever the early closure of a school is rendered necessary by emergencies such as exceptionally severe weather or disruption to fuel supplies.

- 1 It is the responsibility of the head of establishment, in direct consultation with the operator, to arrange the provision of transport at an earlier hour than that specified in the contract. The public transport officer for the area may be able to be of assistance in difficult cases but generally it will be more expedient for the head to liaise with the operator.
- 2 The provision of transport at other than the normal times represents a variation of the terms of the contract and in these circumstances the operator may demand an additional payment. Heads of establishments should endeavour to avoid this wherever possible in negotiation with the operator.
- 3 If there is no way of avoiding additional payment, the head of establishment should
  - (a) ascertain the sum involved,
  - (b) arrange for the account to be sent to the school,
  - (c) verify the account, and
  - (d) pass it without delay to the education office who will initiate the procedures for payment.

**EMERGENCY CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS AND OTHER  
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**CONTACT NAMES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF  
COMMUNITY SERVICES EMERGENCY TEAM**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Office Number</b>	<b>Mobile Number</b>
Gordon Currie	Head of Education	0141 578 8720	07785 253232
Janet McKenna	Business Manager - Integrated Support	0141 578 8932	07703 222158

In the first instance every attempt should be made to contact Gordon Currie.

In the event that Gordon Currie is not available outwith normal working hours, contact should be made with another member of the team in the order shown above.

## DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

## TECHNICAL ADVISERS

PRIMARY SCHOOLS	TECHNICAL ADVISER	OFFICE NO	OUT OF HOURS NO	MOBILE NO
Auchinairn Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2289	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Baldernock Primary	P Tweedie	01360 620 317	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Baljaffray Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2241	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Balmuildy Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2276	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Bearsden Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2254	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Castlehill Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2215	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Clober Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2232	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Colquhoun Park Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2258	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Craigdhu Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2237	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Craighead Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2271	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Gartconner Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2323	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Harestanes Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2320	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Hillhead Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2316	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Holy Family Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2212	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Killermont Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2264	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Lairdsland Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2310	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Lennoxton Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2267	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Lenzie Moss Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2299	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Lenzie Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2303	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Meadowburn Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2293	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Millersneuk Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2307	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Milngavie Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2251	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Mosshead Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2245	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Oxgang Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2313	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
St Agatha's Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2328	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
St Andrew's Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2248	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
St Flannan's Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2222	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
St Helen's Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2286	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
St Joseph's Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2209	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
St Machan's Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2205	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
St Matthew's Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2282	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Torrance Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2228	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Twechar Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2331	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Wester Cleddans Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2280	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Westerton Primary	W Doyle	0141 955 2261	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Woodhill Primary	P Tweedie	0141 955 2218	0800 052 5574	07919 392763

### Technical Advisers Contact Details con'td

<b>SECONDARY SCHOOLS</b>	<b>TECHNICAL ADVISER</b>	<b>OFFICE NO</b>	<b>OUT OF HOURS NO</b>	<b>MOBILE NO</b>
Bearsden Academy	W Doyle	0141 955 2344	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Bishopbriggs Academy	W Doyle	0141 955 2351	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Boclair Academy	W Doyle	0141 955 2358	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Douglas Academy	W Doyle	0141 955 2365	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Kirkintilloch High	P Tweedie	0141 955 2372	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Lenzie Academy	P Tweedie	0141 955 2379	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
St Ninian's High	P Tweedie	0141 955 2386	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Turnbull High	W Doyle	0141 955 2393	0800 052 5574	07770 644354

<b>SPECIAL SCHOOLS</b>	<b>TECHNICAL ADVISER</b>	<b>OFFICE NO</b>	<b>OUT OF HOURS NO</b>	<b>MOBILE NO</b>
Campsie View School	P Tweedie	0141 955 2339	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Merkland School	P Tweedie	0141 955 2336	0800 052 5574	07919 392763

<b>NURSERY SCHOOLS</b>	<b>TECHNICAL ADVISER</b>	<b>OFFICE NO</b>	<b>OUT OF HOURS NO</b>	<b>MOBILE NO</b>
Cleddens Learning & Childcare Centre	P Tweedie	0141 772 7621	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Hillhead Nursery	P Tweedie	0141 955 2317	0800 052 5574	07919 392763

<b>COMMUNITY EDUCATION</b>	<b>TECHNICAL ADVISER</b>	<b>OFFICE NO</b>	<b>OUT OF HOURS NO</b>	<b>MOBILE NO</b>
Auchinairn CEC	W Doyle	0141 563 5015	0800 052 5574	07770 644354
Craighead CEC	P Tweedie	01360 311 884	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Hillhead CEC	P Tweedie	0141 578 6011	0800 052 5574	07919 392763
Milngavie CEC	W Doyle	0141 570 1522	0800 052 5574	07770 644354