

## **Snow Plan December 2011**

### **Decision to send pupil home early from school**

This applies to any extreme weather event.

I have sent pupils home during the day on 2 occasions:

- Flooding July 2007
- Snow January 2010

A decision to send pupils home early from school happens when it is becoming clear that getting pupils home will prove problematic. This is indicated by:

- Contact from transport operators to say that there is extreme weather in the area in which they operate and that they wish to come and pick up pupils
- Parents contact school with the information that there is extreme weather in their local area and they are concerned about their child getting home
- Staff are contacted by their own child's school and are asked to go and fetch them because of extreme weather
- Local routes become hazardous and local news, police and The Highways Agency confirm difficult driving conditions

### **Process for sending pupils home early from school**

Senior Leadership Team and Admin Staff have allocated roles with the following made clear:

- One phone on the land line must be kept clear for incoming calls with a member of staff allocated to the task of answering these
- We must establish that parents will be at home to meet their child before a pupil is sent home
- Bus lines can only leave when all parents have confirmed that they will be at home

### **Closing School before it starts**

This is a very difficult decision to make and can only come after careful consideration of local conditions. Nevertheless the decision has to be taken early in order to allow parents to make alternative arrangements and also to ensure that transport does not set out unnecessarily nor is it reasonable to turn pupils around when they have set off as parents are expecting them to be in school. A decision of that nature would require that I then follow the same procedure as for evacuating the school.

My decision to close the school is informed by the following:

- If snow/flooding has been indicated I get up at 5.30am to review weather information on the Met Office website, BBC online weather and Netweather. I also use information available from The Highways Agency to ascertain the conditions of main roads.
- I ring Gill Stokes at 6am. Gill ensures that she is outside the school gates for when I ring at 6am to give me information on the condition of local roads and the school site
- I then ring Niki Jones who has local radio on to establish the conditions local main roads
- Jayne Barnes and Liz Steed both ensure that by the time I ring at approximately 6.15/6.20am they have been out to consider the condition of local main roads
- Nicky Morle has a different local radio station on and is able to inform me of other local conditions when I phone
- I also ring the LA Education transport co-ordinator to establish which transport operators are able to deploy their vehicles

Following this information I must then make a decision based on the following considerations:

- Will we be able to get buses on and off the school site safely
- Will enough staff be able to get to school to ensure that all the needs of pupils can be met
- If pupils get to school will we be able to get them home again at the end of the day
- Will I need to evacuate the pupils during the day
- Is there a safe, accessible area outside school that could be used if we have to evacuate because of fire (an added danger if it so cold that pipes could burst onto electrical sources)

If my decision is to close the school we use the following methods to inform parents, staff and transport:

- Text 2 Parents – All parents, staff, drivers and passenger assistants will be contacted by a message on mobile phone provided we have been given the number
- Announcement on local radio – Mercia and Touch FM
- On the warwickshire.gov.uk school closure site
- Cascade of telephone contact to staff
- I phone all transport operators

Following closure of the school I must then consider my plan for the next day:

- What is the forecast for: the rest of the day; overnight; the next day
- What is the condition of the school site
- How many school staff will be able to get into school to meet the needs of all pupils given the condition of rural roads as well as main roads
- Only the site manager and gardener can be instructed to clear snow
- How many staff would be able to volunteer to clear snow
- Where do we put the vehicles of staff clearing snow in order to ensure the school site can be properly cleared and any snow there is not compacted by tyres whilst being mindful of the condition of local roads for our neighbours

I fully appreciate that the decision I make will impact significantly on a number of people. Parents need to work themselves. Our pupils do not always respond well to changes in routine. I make every effort to ensure that my decision is based on a full assessment of the local situation and also undertake to get into school myself every day where it is possible.

Judith Humphry

Revised December 2011