

The Hawthorns Primary School

Emergency School Closure Procedure

In the rare event of severe weather or other emergency it may be necessary to close the school.

These decisions are not made lightly and we are very aware of the difficulties this causes for our families and of the disruption to our pupils' education.

Decisions are made on the basis of pupil safety – both from the perspective of physical site safety and on the basis of sufficient staff being able to reach school to ensure safe supervision of our pupils. This decision will be made following a risk assessment.

Children's Services will be consulted about closure decisions, or potential closure decisions, where it is possible to do so. In cases when an urgent decision has had to be made, the school is acting on advice issued by Children's Services, or a potential closure decision is confirmed, Children's Services will be notified of the confirmed closure as soon as possible.

We may, at our discretion, decide to close the school to some year groups and keep it open for others.

The Local Authority aims to issue timely advice to schools in cases of widespread situations or 'rising tide' events, such as notice of adverse weather events and flood warnings.

In *exceptional* cases, the Local Authority reserves the right to take a global decision to close schools, or to issue a directive to individual or groups of schools. The Council has a strategic responsibility for Health and Safety and Service Provision, including responsibility for responding to civil contingencies and potential major emergencies.

Out of school hours

The School does its utmost to keep parents and carers informed at the earliest opportunity regarding an emergency closure. Where there is some doubt about the situation the next working day, the school will issue a warning notice to parents.

The school will do everything in its power to make and publish the decision by 7:30 am on the day in question; however, it must be appreciated that some situations may not give enough notice.

If you think there may be a possibility of the school closing e.g. severe weather, we ask that you check using the following methods:

1. The school will email or text all parents via the automated school messaging system to inform parents that the school is closed.
2. We will put a message on the homepage of our website.

3. The school phone system will have a recorded message informing callers that the school is closed.
4. Local Radio Stations will be advised (BBC Berkshire, Heart FM).

During school hours

Closing a school is never an easy option so, before making the decision to close, the Headteacher will undertake a rigorous risk assessment and decide if there is significant risk of severe injury, ill health or inability to comply with relevant legislation.

We will let parents know the situation as soon as possible through an email or text message and via the school website.

We will inform Wokingham Borough council 'Childrens Services' of the decision to close.

We will make every effort to keep pupils in school as long as possible to ensure they are supervised and safe.

Parents who wish to come into school and collect their child may do so, but may not collect any other pupils unless we receive a telephone call from the other parents confirming that this is acceptable.

All pupils will only be released to custodial parent/guardian or person pre-designated by the parent as an authorised contact.

In the event that the school closure has led to the pupils and staff being evacuated to a local establishment this information will be shared with parents through a text message and via the school website to enable parents to collect their child from the correct location. Our evacuation points are Woosehill Community Church or Windmill Primary School.

The school will put in to place a system to log the movements of the pupils, including the name of person collecting the pupil, time and date.

Returning to school after a closure

An email or text message will be sent to parents and carers and announcements will be made on the school website and local radio. Parents may also telephone school for further information.

Where the closure is due to reasons, such as heating or water supply failure, an email or text message will be sent updating parents on the progress of the repairs and indicating when the school will re-open.