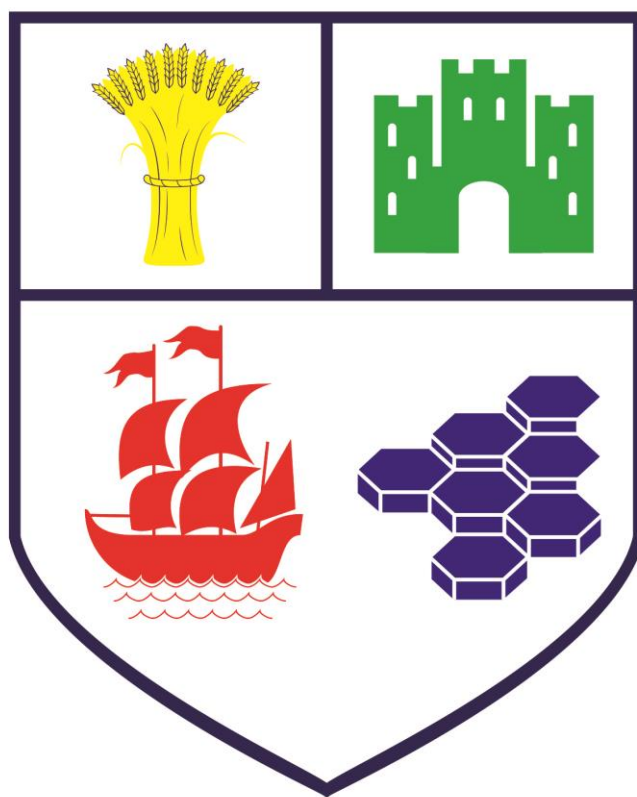


Dunseverick Primary School



Inclement Weather Policy

This policy was reviewed & adopted by the BOG

November 2022

Signed by the Principal

Signed by the Chair of the BOG

Review Date

November 2024

RATIONALE

This document sets out Dunseverick Primary School's policy in relation to the impact on services and the requirement for pupils and teachers to attend school during periods of severe or inclement weather.

Its purpose is to:

- Ensure the safety and well being of pupils and staff
- Ensure that all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in the event of severe weather

DEFINITION

Inclement weather can be defined as weather which is sufficiently adverse as to cause reduced visibility, where there are very high winds, where road surfaces become hazardous due to snow, ice or floods, or where there is a danger of vehicles being stranded in remote locations.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The interest and safety of our pupils and staff are paramount under these circumstances.

Every attempt will be made to ensure continuity of education for our pupils and school will remain open wherever possible. However, during periods of extreme weather, it may not be possible to open the school for safety reasons. Alternatively, there may be circumstances where deteriorating weather conditions force a decision to close the school early. In such circumstances an agreed procedure will be followed.

The decision to close the school will be taken by the Principal (or an agreed deputy) in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors who will consider agreed criteria for closure.

The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Insufficient staff are able to come in to ensure satisfactory Pupil-Teacher Ratios
- Conditions on site are dangerous
- Local conditions are considered to be, or are anticipated to later become, too hazardous for travel.

In circumstances of extreme weather, such as heavy snowfall, the Principal will consider the closure criteria as far in advance of closure as possible – the night before if circumstances allow. This will allow early communication with stakeholders and enable parents to make alternative arrangements if required. However, decisions can only be taken the night before when all indications are that adverse conditions will continue or worsen overnight, otherwise the Principal will defer decisions to the morning.

SCHOOL CLOSURE PROCEDURES

In the event of school closure due to inclement or adverse weather conditions, the following procedures will be followed.

1. Decision to close the school is taken by the Principal in consultation with the Board of Governors.
2. Parents and staff will, in the first instance, be informed of the closure through the use of our school texting service.
3. The closure decision will be uploaded onto the school's website and Facebook page.
4. Local media will be informed using agreed procedures defined by the Department of Education.
5. The EANI and DENI will be informed of the school closure.

In the event of the school having to close early, the following will apply:

- The Principal will comply with any request from a transport provider that wishes to transport certain pupils early in response to meteorological warnings. This will particularly apply to pupils living in outlying rural areas.
- Parents will be contacted as soon as possible by the school text messaging service. Pupils will remain in school until they are collected or arrangements have been made for their care.
- Consideration will also be given to employees who have to travel longer distances to attend work. In the event of hazardous driving conditions, these employees may be sent home first.

STAFF GUIDELINES

- All staff members must make every reasonable attempt to attend school unless they receive specific notification from the Principal.
- It is essential that employees who are going to be late or are unable to attend work notify the Principal as soon as is reasonably practical and if possible by 7:30am.
- Staff members may be allowed to go home early if there is a genuine need on the basis of their personal safety.
- If the school has been closed by the Principal, all employees will be paid at their normal daily rate.
- In the event that the school remains closed and weather conditions do not improve, resulting in absence of more than one day, employees should maintain regular contact with the Principal.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School Member	Responsibilities
Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To come to school appropriately dressed for inclement weather, including warm coat, hat, scarf and gloves. ▪ To behave responsibly on the school grounds when there are icy or dangerous conditions.
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To ensure they supply the school with up to date contact information and a working mobile phone number. ▪ To ensure their children attend school if conditions allow. ▪ To ensure their children come to school appropriately dressed for inclement weather, including warm coat, hat, scarf and gloves. ▪ To ensure their children understand the importance of behaving responsibly on the school grounds when there are icy or dangerous conditions. ▪ To make arrangements to collect their children as soon as is practical in the event of an early closure. ▪ To take note of text messages from the school and local media with respect to school closure information.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To make every reasonable attempt to attend school unless they receive notification from the Principal. ▪ To notify the Principal by 7:30am if they are unable to attend school due to inclement weather conditions. ▪ To support the Principal in the event of a school closure. ▪ To assist in the supervision of all children in the school during periods of inclement weather, or early school closure.
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place regarding preparation for and action to be taken in the event of inclement weather. ▪ Consider the agreed criteria regarding school closure. ▪ Complete a risk assessment checklist (in conjunction with the buildings supervisor). ▪ Make an informed decision on school closure in consultation with the Board of Governors. ▪ Ensure that the information concerning school closure is relayed to parents and staff quickly and efficiently.
Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consult with the Principal to make an informed decision regarding school closures. ▪ Ensure (through consultation) that appropriate policies and procedures are in place regarding preparation for and action to be taken in the event of inclement weather. ▪ Ensure the health and safety of all school stakeholders on the school grounds.

EVALUATION

This policy is a living document and will be reviewed as we assess its effectiveness of our aims. This may result in a change of organisation, method or content as required for individual circumstance.

DUNSEVERICK PRIMARY SCHOOL INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSURE CHECKLIST

	Key Considerations						Assessment	
Weather Conditions	What are the current local weather conditions?							
	Are local roads/routes to the school passable?							
	What are the forecasted long term weather conditions?							
	Are there any N Ireland Met Office weather warnings in place?							
Health and Safety	Is the school building accessible?							
	Can pedestrian/vehicular routes be cleared of snow and treated with salt?							
	Can vehicles access the school car park?							
	Is the pedestrian route at the front entrance accessible?							
	Can these routes be maintained throughout the day?							
	Can pupils and staff be safely evacuated in the case of an emergency?							
	In an emergency, could the Emergency Services access the school?							
	Is the school appropriately heated?							
	Can an appropriate level of heating be maintained?							
	Are fuel supplies adequate?							
	Are water systems working appropriately?							
Are electricity/power supplies working appropriately?								
Staffing	Can sufficient teaching/supervisory staff members get to school to enable the school to operate safely? PTR 1:30							
	Mrs Smyth		Miss Esler		Mrs Taggart		Mrs Milligan	
	Mrs Scott		Mrs Taylor		Emma		Morwenna	
	Zaneese		Rachel		Barbara		Sharon	
	Rachael		Rebecca		Noelene		Amanda	
	Dawn		Rosemary		Judith		Charlene	
Meals / Transport	Is the school meals service operating?							
	Is yellow bus operating?							
	Is blue bus operating?							

DUNSEVERICK PRIMARY SCHOOL – INCLEMENT WEATHER RISK ASSESSMENT

Activity /Issue	Hazards Identified	Persons at risk	Control Measures	Additional Considerations
Travel to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dangerous travelling conditions Risk of accident/vehicle collisions Pupils unable to walk to school due to distance/lack of footpaths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Building Supervisor Staff Members Pupils Parents Bus Drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal to monitor local and regional weather forecasts and warnings No travel to be considered if advice is issued for essential journeys only Prior planning by staff regarding alternative routes to school where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location of staff in relation to the school Pupils living in outlying rural areas Alternative locations to park cars and walk onto grounds Walking to school inappropriate due to location
Accessibility to main entrance through the car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicles unable to safely enter/exit the school car park due to slope and lack of space Risk of accident/vehicle collisions or cars becoming stranded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Building Supervisor Staff Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cars to be parked in adjacent car park and pedestrian access used instead Signs to be displayed on car park gate Staff aware of entrance closure through guidance issued from Principal Pedestrian paths to the front gate to be cleared of snow and ice, and appropriately salted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjacent car park not gritted Staff must cross Feigh Road – not gritted/salted
Pedestrian Areas around the school ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slips, trips and falls Related medical problems eg fractures etc Pupils/parents must cross Feigh Road – not gritted/salted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Building Supervisor Staff Members Pupils Parents Visitors to the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure adequate supplies of salt and grit Building supervisor to anticipate when snow/ice removal or salting/gritting of the grounds to commence Prioritise areas for clearing snow and gritting (including fire escape areas) Building supervisor to organise working times to implement gritting procedures If slopes/steps in dangerous conditions, prevent access to these areas using hazard tape/signs Treat cleared paths with salt and grit if freezing temperatures continue throughout the day Where playgrounds remain excessively slippery due to compacted snow and ice, prohibit outside play If playgrounds remain in use, restrict outside play and review supervision arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure adequate cover for first aid
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate supervision of pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Teachers Pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal, in consultation with governors to establish what constitutes appropriate pupil teacher ratios and levels of supervision Staff aware of policy and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis to be placed on safety, taking account of pupils need, age and likely attendance Consider emergency

			<p>procedures related to inclement weather</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to inform Principal of expected absence before 7:30am • Staff may be sent home early if it is considered unsafe for them to remain in school. 	<p>arrangements if pupils/staff stranded at school</p>
Access to mobile classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slips, trips and falls • Pupils/staff must use steps or slope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian path/steps to mobiles to be cleared of snow and ice, and appropriately salted • If slopes/steps in dangerous conditions, prevent access to these areas using hazard tape/signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If steps/slope cannot be made safe classes may have to be combined or use hall and mobiles not used
Heating and Welfare Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperature in building below permitted work level (16°C) • No sanitary or drinking water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • Building Supervisor • Staff Members • Pupils • Parents • Visitors to the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor heating throughout cold weather periods to prevent frozen/burst pipes • Regular maintenance of water systems • Buildings supervisor to complete regular checks of heating and water systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the school cannot be heated and provision of water cannot be made, then the school will have to close
Keeping the school open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slips, trips and falls • Risk of weather deteriorating, or conditions worsening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • Building Supervisor • Staff Members • Pupils • Parents • Visitors to the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main walk ways and pedestrian access to be salted and gritted appropriately • Prevent outdoor play if snow/ice cannot be easily removed or reduced • If clear areas available for outdoor play pupils should be prevented from running and supervision level should be higher • Principal to monitor weather conditions through the Met Office, local media and follow advice from SEELB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May need to stagger break times due to reduced space or to facilitate higher supervision levels • If staff numbers low can adequate supervision be achieved

KEY CONTACTS

CONTACT	NAME	PHONE NUMBER	WEBSITE/EMAIL
NI Met Office			www.metoffice.gov.uk
NI Water			www.niwater.com
NI Roads Service			www.roadsni.gov.uk
PSNI		0845 600 8000	www.psni.police.uk
NI Fire and Rescue Service		028 7082 5830	www.nifrs.org / coleraine.district@nifrs.org
EANI – North Eastern Region	Nigel Freeburn	028 2566 2390	nigel.freeburn@eani.org.uk
	County Hall	028 2565 3333	
	Health & Safety Section	028 2565 5366	
Ulster Bus	Contact Centre	028 9066 6630	
	Coleraine Depot	028 7035 8532	
Yellow Bus	Mervyn McGrath	07737025183	
DENI	Curriculum Support Team	0289127 9936	curriculum.supportteam@deni.gov.uk
BBC	Pauline McKenna		nischools@bbc.co.uk
NI Rivers Agency			www.riversagencyni.gov.uk