

## Emergency School Closure Policy

1. This policy works alongside all other relevant policies held by St Paul's Catholic School. Any closure of the school is a most unusual occurrence and each closure is unique, making forward planning complex.

Possible reasons for why the school may need to be closed include:

- Fire
- Flood
- Gale damage
- Severe weather conditions
- Lack of power, heating or water.
- Serious break-in etc
- Infectious disease or widespread illness.

At St Paul's it will be the Headteacher that will take any decision to:

- (a)** Close the school or
- (b)** not to open the school

In the case of infectious illness / disease the Headteacher may be directed to close the school by the relevant Health Authority.

2. In the case of (a) above, the decision will be taken only in the most exceptional of circumstances and after the following have been considered / actioned.
  - i. That school transport can be provided / organised for those students that would usually use it e.g. buses and taxis.
  - ii. That information is posted on the school website, via Parentmail and the Local Authority Website if possible for all parents briefly explaining the reasons for and time of closure together, if possible, with details of when the school will reopen.
  - iii. That if a closure occurs during a school day that all pupils are released only after being informed that if they are not sure that they can gain access to home or if their parents would not want them to go home on their own, they attend a central meeting point in school. Parents have indicated their wishes about the release of their children in the Year 7 parental permissions booklet and this information will be used in the event of a closure during the day. All parents are expected to have emergency plans in place so that children are not left in school and they will be reminded of this fact in a letter sent out once a year giving details of the closure policy. This letter will include an indication of the number of unplanned school closures in the preceding three years.
  - iv. That staff are informed as to whether they are required to stay on site or not, when they need to return or arrangements for providing such information via Line Managers.

- v. Information is left on the school answer phone and website regarding the expected duration of the closure and possible re-opening.
3. In the case of (b) above (paragraph 1), the decision not to open the school will be taken with the following being addressed
- i. Local radio stations are contacted to broadcast details of the closure. The Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher have special code words for this purpose.
  - ii. Staff are informed should they not be required to attend and the expected duration of the closure. Staff will be contacted via a contact tree, all managers must obtain contact details from their colleagues. Staff are also advised to listen to the local radio, visit the school's website and the Local Authority's website to ascertain information.

Failure to contact a colleague should be reported back to the Leadership Group contact.

The details for re-opening of school will be highlighted on the website.

- iii. The bus / taxi companies are contacted to ensure that all pupils are not transported to school or are returned home if journeys have already begun.
- iv. Relevant and available staff will be posted on the entrances to the school to inform / parents pupils of the closure. If possible, a letter giving details should be made available to takeaway.
- v. Information is provided on the school answering machine (when possible) and website about the closure and re-opening time once known.
- vi. In all cases of school closures, letter will be provided for parents after re-opening providing full details of the reasons for the school closure and action taken.

#### 4. Supporting learning if the school is closed for extended periods.

Our objective is that pupils in our care are provided with a reasonable degree of teaching and learning if we are closed for an extended period of time, for example during a flu pandemic.

We periodically review the proportion of pupils with IT facilities at home, and the extent to which pupils with such facilities could access school IT systems from home. This helps us to plan and organise remote learning.

All guidance is subject to an 'as far as reasonably practical' proviso; a severe pandemic would cause major disruption to all aspects of life.

In the event of the school being closed to pupils, staff will still be expected to report for work, though the Headteacher will decide whether staff need to come into school or could work from home.

In the event of the school being closed for an extended period of time, we will support children's learning through remote access. Pupils will be able to access specific tasks for each subject via the learning platform. Teachers will set up forums and other web based activities that pupils can participate in from home. We hope to provide as broad a curriculum as possible in the circumstances but we cannot aim to provide the full and balanced curriculum that would normally be offered, nor could fully personalised learning be offered.

Pupils should email work to teachers' school email addresses. These can be accessed remotely by teachers so that they can provide individual feedback to pupils. Teachers should only be expected to participate in teaching and learning activities during normal working hours. Should the reason for an extended closure be a pandemic or infectious disease then it may be expected that a number of teaching staff may become ill. Pupils must take this into account when expecting feedback on work.

The postal service is an alternative method of getting work to and from children. If teaching staff are able to collect posted work from school it could be marked and returned to pupils' home addresses.

We will provide parents with advice on how they can support their children's learning while the school is closed. The Learning Platform will include information about how to use a child's home surroundings or programmes on television or radio to inform their work.

### **Post-Extended Closure**

After having been closed for an extended period of time we will plan detailed and structured activities to help children catch up on the education that they have missed such activities will be conducted during normal school hours and there will not be an expectation that term dates are changed to make up for time missed due to school closure.

**Review: 2018 - 19 by Leadership Team for presentation to following meeting of Governors' Resources and Personnel Committee.**