



Principal: **Ms S Anderson** B.Ed.(Hons), M.Ed. PQH

Contingency Plan for Severe Weather – January 2017

Aim

Our School appreciates that any closure will disrupt children's education and can make life very difficult for parents, especially those who work and need to find childcare at short notice. Therefore Clifton School has developed this contingency plan for severe weather on the assumption that the school will endeavour to stay open where possible dependent upon Staff availability.

Exceptionally severe weather or other crisis events may disrupt even the best of plans. It may be necessary to close school for a variety of extreme reasons including:

- Exceptional severe weather including snow, flooding or storms
- Disruption to national transport systems, for example through petrol or diesel shortages
- Accommodation problems, for example loss of power supply, heating failures or fire damage
- Availability of school transport services

Decision for closure

The decision to close a school will rest with the Principal or in her absence the Vice Principal, and will be confirmed with the Chair of the Board of Governors. The decision will be made where possible before 7.00 am and on the basis of information received from the media about weather, supplemented by on the spot observation from the building supervisor and through appropriate external agencies such as the Met Office.

Factors involved in reaching the decision to close the school are likely to be:

- Access to the school, i.e. road conditions (obstructions, snow, ice, flooding etc.) prevents safe access to the grounds and building.
- Breakdown of school essential services (heating, electrical services, water, storm damage etc).
- Lack of: First Aid Cover, Designated Persons for Child Protection, Food Service etc.
- The Principal or in her absence, the Vice Principal, will comply with the guidelines within "Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School" (September 2011).

Notification of Closure

Staff, Governors, parents and pupils will be advised of closure as follows:

- The Principal will contact BBC N I so that the information can be included in the BBC's Digital Text Service and, if a significant number of schools decide not to open, on the Northern Ireland news website at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ninews>
- The school secretary will add a notice of closure to the school website (www.cliftonschooll.org.uk) and send a text message to parents who have provided mobile phone contact numbers for the school texting service.
- Finally, information signs will be posted at all gates to the school grounds and, if possible, the school phone line will be attended until 10.30am.

In order to facilitate this plan parents and staff are asked to keep school informed of any changes to their contact telephone numbers. Please do so by contacting the Main Office. The procedure will be repeated on a daily basis for as long as the closure is required.



Initial Response to the Event of Severe Weather

1) Staff present at school as soon as is possible

Although it is recognised that severe weather conditions make it difficult for staff to get to and from work, unless advised to the contrary by the Principal or Vice Principal, the expectation is that all staff will present themselves for work as soon as they can safely do so.

2) Clearance of snow

Within the school site, the school is responsible for snow clearance and the clearing of approach paths is the specific task of the building supervisor. When severe weather is forecast, the building supervisor will spread salt and grit on the evening before and on arrival at 7.00 am. In extreme conditions, he will request the snow clearing services of the Education Authority. Please note the clearance of public roads is the responsibility of the Road Service Department.

3) School hours reduced

In the unlikely event that severe weather conditions become hazardous when children have already reported to school, pupils will be sent home early. The following conditions will apply:

- If EA Transport is available pupils will be sent home only if their parent has been contacted and the parent has confirmed that they will be at home to receive their child.
- If EA Transport is not available, parents will be asked to collect their child from school
- Staff will be permitted to go home early as soon as practically possible.

Stephanie Anderson
Principal