



Wood End School

Yeomans Avenue, Harpenden, AL5 3EF
Tel No. 01582 761636 Fax: 01582 762823
Headteacher, Mr Richard Boulton



Severe Weather Plan

Previously Reviewed (Author & Date): Gillian Bird Feb 2015

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Reviewed By: Gillian Bird

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Adapted from: HCC Model Plan Nov 2016 CSF4514

Signature: (Headteacher) **Date:**

Signature: (Chair of Governors) **Date:**

‘Learning Together, Respecting Each Other’
***‘Wood End School is an inclusive school and respects
and values the diversity of the community’***

PROCEDURES TO DEAL WITH THE CONSEQUENTIAL ISSUES ARISING FROM SEVERE WEATHER OR A PUBLIC EMERGENCY

This guidance sets out the actions Wood End School needs to take in the event of severe weather or if a public emergency is declared by the local authority.

1. Closure Decisions

- 1.1 The decision to close a school in severe weather, or when responding to a public emergency, should be taken by the Headteacher based on the following:
 - Local conditions
 - This guidance
 - An assessment of risk
 - Information from the local authority
- 1.2 Schools with reduced teaching staff should consider staying open and providing group activities to limit the impact on working parents.
- 1.3 If the Council advises a school or group of schools of a public emergency that may require their school(s) to close the HCC Warn and Inform procedure will be followed. See section **Warn and Inform**.
- 1.4 Where possible, advanced warning will be given. Where this has been issued, we should consider how this might impact on our establishment, for example:
 - Staffing issues
 - Fuel supplies
 - Catering supplies
 - Transport issues e.g. Passenger Transport Unit, taxis etc.
- 1.5 Where it is likely that there will be prolonged severe weather or closures related to a public emergency, a Local Authority team will be set up to co-ordinate and support services. Regular emails will be sent to the Headteacher giving the county picture and any new information as it becomes available.
- 1.6 The school should use the Closure Notification System (CNS) to inform the Local Authority of closures. Messages received via this system will automatically be forwarded to any individual who has signed up to receive notifications from a specific school and will also be posted on a public facing noticeboard linked from www.hertfordshire.gov.uk. An email will also be automatically generated and sent to our nominated radio station. Allow up to 10 minutes for the message to show on the noticeboard.
- 1.7 Should the school require any additional assistance, for example if the premises has sustained serious damage, follow the guidance in the Schools Emergency Response Plan and use the contact numbers below:

Monday-Friday	8.30 – 17.30	01438 737261
Saturday	9.00 – 16.00	01438 737261

2. HCC Telephone Helpline

- 2.1 Information and updates about any interruptions to normal business of HCC services can be obtained by telephoning the HCC staff helpline:

The number 01992 556616 has thirty lines and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- 2.2 The helpline will also be used to provide information during any other emergencies which may require us to close any HCC buildings.

3. Staffing

- 3.1 Unless specifically told otherwise, staff will be expected to use their best endeavours to attend work without putting themselves or others at risk. When the police recommend that motorists undertake only essential journeys this is considered to include travel to work and school.
- 3.2 The Headteacher should ensure there is an up-to-date list of home contact/mobile phone details of all staff and parents.
- 3.3 Where it is deemed too unsafe or difficult for staff to attend their workplace, other options should be considered.
Teaching staff that cannot get to school should try wherever possible to offer to help out at any nearby school. The Headteacher will decide if the staff member has sufficient identification and allocate suitable supervised tasks. Acceptable identification would consist of a DBS certificate, a recent payslip and photo ID such as a driving licence or passport.

4. Preparation for Severe Weather

- 4.1 In severe weather make sure that the heating is left on during 'out of hours' periods for frost protection purposes. Where appropriate, ensure there is adequate fuel for prolonged closures.
- 4.2 Brief staff in advance to ensure they know what is expected of them.
- 4.3 Brief parents, children e.t.c. in advance to ensure they understand how they can get up-to-date information, e.g. www.hertfordshire.gov.uk, local radio, school website, email and/or text.
- 4.4 Ensure regular suppliers/contractors are informed of procedures and confirm arrangements are in place for essential services/deliveries.
- 4.5 Where schools are open, risk assessments must be undertaken to ensure the health and safety of staff, pupils and all site users. Inspections of paths and walkways should be carried out regularly and documented. This should include local arrangements for clearing and salting when ice or snow appears, as well as any failures to the surfaces.
As the school is insured with HCC, the Council's insurance section will deal with any liability issues that arise. Any claim that is made to the school should be passed to the insurance section immediately.
The team will then process the claim and deal direct with the claimant, or their appointed representatives.
- 4.6 Where gales or high wind warnings have been issued, the site should be checked for dead or damaged branches/trees and other potential hazards to people or property.

- 4.7 Where it is not possible for some staff and/or children to return home, the school should ensure there are plans in place to provide warmth and hot refreshments.
- 4.8 In extreme conditions HCC may request that schools or other establishments be used as rest centres for members of the public.

5. Reopening of School Following Closure

5.1 When the severe weather has passed, establishments should check their premises before announcing that it will reopen. The manager or key holder should inspect the premises for signs of damage, e.g. heating failure, flooding, burst pipes or damaged trees.

5.2 School sites that have experienced damage serious enough to warrant declaring a Critical Incident should follow the guidance in the School Emergency Response Plan and use the numbers below:

Monday – Friday	8.30 – 17.30	01438 737261
Saturday	9.00 – 16.00	01438 737261

5.3 The Headteacher should use our contact system for advising staff of the situation and update the schools status on the closure notification system.

6. Responding to Severe Weather

6.1 Schools no longer need to call the local authority or local radio stations. The Closure Notification System will inform both the local authority and radio stations.

Each school has a nominated radio station(s). An email is automatically sent to the nominated radio station(s) when the school sends a message into the system. The radio stations can then decide if they are able to read out school closures, host them on their websites or point listeners to www.hertfordshire.gov.uk

6.2 It is expected that the CNS will be used as a result of severe weather conditions but it could be used to inform parents and the public of other major incidents that make a closure necessary. Decisions on using the CNS for anything other than snow will be taken by the Local Authority and communicated to schools.

6.3 Please remember that in very extreme cases the radio stations may be overloaded and you should use all other means possible to inform parents and others that the school will be closed:

- Tell parents to look on www.hertfordshire.gov.uk
- Publish information on our own website
- Leave a message on the answer phone
- Have contact numbers for staff and parents and others to hand –in order to email/text them (via Schoolcomms)
- Leave a message on the main entrance or gate and, ensure someone is there to meet any children/parents who may turn up.
- Inform parents/staff in the school newsletter of the above methods (include this in the procedural information given out to parents in their 'starting school' packs).

- 6.4 If at all possible, use the Closure Notification System and notify parents of your school's closure between midday and mid-afternoon of the day before. All messages are cleared from the noticeboard each day at midday. If you cannot make a decision until the morning, please send your message as early as possible to reach parents and children before they set off for school. Please allow up to 10 minutes for the message to show on the noticeboard.
- 6.5 Wood End should keep a copy of these procedures with the Schools Emergency Response Plan.

APPENDIX A

WARN AND INFORM

If the Local Authority needs to contact a school or group of schools to notify them of any public emergency that may affect their school or locality the following procedure will be followed:

- An SMS Message will be sent from mobile number 07860 022148 to the mobile phone numbers provided by the school for the Headteacher, members of SLT and Chair of Governors, as emergency contacts on Solero.
- An email will be sent from the following address – Hertfordshire County Council conf-XXX@everbridge.net (the X's represent unique reference numbers that change with each message sent).