

Robertstown National School

**Emergency
Closures
Procedure**

Robertstown National School

Emergency Closures Policy

Introduction

The school policy on emergency closures was drafted as a whole school exercise. It was circulated to the entire school community in Robertstown and will be posted on the school website in due course.

Rationale

The need for the school to devise a policy on emergency closures in recent years is primarily due to

- a) Upgrading of the local ESB scheme on a phased basis which has led to supplies being disconnected on a number of occasions in recent years
- b) Inclement weather, such as heavy snowfalls, high winds etc.
- c) Building programmes and alterations to the design of the school which have necessitated unscheduled closures on Health and Safety grounds in recent years

Relationship to School Ethos

Robertstown National School strives to provide a child friendly, secure environment catering for all the needs of all students as far as is practicable and where respect is fostered in a culture, which values diversity and difference

Aims and Objectives

- To provide for the welfare of all pupils while on the school premises
- To ensure a safe, child friendly school environment is available to all children
- To conform with Health and Safety legislation

Procedures

Heavy Snowfall

In the event of a heavy snowfall, the Principal shall consult with the Chairperson of the B.O.M. as soon as is feasible, and a decision is made as to whether it is in the interests of all parties to close the school.

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If it is decided to close the school all parents will be informed by text message of closing.

The local radio station will be contacted and asked to make regular announcements of closure.

Disconnection of Services

Where water or electricity services to the school are to be disconnected, a week's notification is normally given to the school authorities. This enables the school to furnish the parent body with the relevant advance warning of such closures via circular or text. It is not the policy of the school to confirm such closures through the local Radio station.

High Winds / Thunderstorms

The procedures in place for heavy snowfall are generally replicated in the event of storms / lightning i.e. parents and bus operators are contacted via local radio or text and informed that the school will remain closed. If the school has already opened and is in operation when high winds etc. occur and remaining on the premises is a risk to all, teachers will remain on the premises until all children have been collected by either parents / guardians or bus operators.

Critical Incident / Death

In some instances the school might remain closed for pupils in the event of a critical incident or death of a staff member, B.O.M member or pupil. Parents are informed of such closures either by circular or text whichever is appropriate. In this particular instance, the school may remain open to staff and B.O.M or Parents Association if issues such as church services, Guards of honour, readings or counseling is required (See Critical Incident Policy).

Roles and Responsibilities

Emergency closures in the school, place particular responsibilities on various personnel within the school chain of command: -

- Positive school community feedback
- Conformance with Health and Safety legislation
- Maintaining a safe school environment for all staff, children and parents

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Ratification and Communication

This policy has been in operation in the school since 2008 having been communicated by the then B.O.M by means of circular following ratification at the school B.O.M meeting of Robertstown National School.

Implementation and Review

The redrafted policy has been implemented and will be reviewed in the light of unplanned events that lead to unscheduled school closures, but not later than 2012