



Protocol in case of the need for school closure

Below is the advice given to all Plymouth Headteachers when considering if there is the need to close a school temporarily. If a decision is made to close the school we will use all available communication channels to inform parents. This will include the school's website, Facebook and Twitter accounts. Individual phone calls will not be made but if possible text messages will be sent to parents. We will also inform the local radio stations.

Heart FM
BBC Radio Devon
Radio Plymouth
Radio Cornwall

Parents should be asked not to call the media as this may impede communication between schools and the radio stations.

1. School closure (including extreme weather conditions)

In the event of multiple school closures, the Assistant Director for Learning and Communities in the Council will liaise with the Civil Protection Unit, Emergency Services and other Council departments to offer advice to Schools' Emergency Management Teams.

If this advice is to recommend that schools in general close, this will be given out by local radio stations and communicated via the council's official social media pages to help parents.

2. Closure assessment criteria

Head Teachers, in consultation with their Chair of Governors if possible, should assess the situation when taking account of the following:

- The safety and accessibility of the site and surrounding area
- The availability of heat, light, power and water
- Availability of staff
- Availability of meals

3. Communication of decision

The decision to close a school should be taken at an appropriate time. This should allow for adequate communication to parents and pupils. **Parents should be asked not to call the media as this may impede communication between schools and the radio stations.**

In the event that weather conditions deteriorate overnight, the Head Teacher should liaise with their Site Services Officer/Caretaker to check out the conditions against the above criteria.

Head Teachers are asked to set up an email distribution list that includes all the relevant people to inform when a decision to close a school is made (see table below).

You may want to ensure that a few nominated people save this distribution to email accounts that can be accessed either from the school or from other locations if it's not possible to issue emails from the school itself.

Remember to inform any scheduled visitors to the school of the closure in addition to those on the distribution list.

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