



South Grove Primary School

Adverse Weather Conditions and Emergency School Closure Policy

Date Governors Agreed:	JANUARY 2017		
Date to be reviewed:	JANUARY 2018		
Head Teacher:		Date:	
		Date:	

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The school will make every effort to remain open whenever possible and operating as normal.
- 1.2 In the event of severe adverse weather or an emergency i.e no water or heating, it may be necessary to make a decision to close the school for the safety of the children and staff.
- 1.3 The decision to close the school will be made by the Head Teacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors. The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:
 1. Insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely.
 2. Conditions on site are dangerous.
 3. Conditions on site are felt to compromise the health and safety of staff and pupils.
 4. Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous to travel.

The school's first priority will always be to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff, parents and families.

Where practical, we will consider opening later in order to enable staff and children to have additional time to travel to school safely.

During adverse weather, we will ensure that entrances to school and paths are clear within school to make access as safe as possible, and work with the Kier team of staff to support this.

School Closure Procedure:

Once the decision to close the school has been taken, parents and staff will be informed via our text service. A headline message will also be posted on the School Website (www.southgrove.waltham.sch.uk) using Open Check for Parents at the earliest opportunity giving the required information – see below – so that the closure of our school can be notified to the Local Authority and all stakeholders.

Where possible, a member of staff will be in school to advise parents and families on arrival that the school is closed, and to answer telephone calls from concerned parents.

Parents will be informed via the Head Teacher's newsletters on a regular basis and the website that this is the procedure to be followed.

Informing staff:

It is recognized that adverse weather conditions will, at times, make travel to and from work difficult. However, employees are expected to make all reasonable efforts to reach their workplace. In the event of closure, staff will be informed by text

and as a safeguard, use the emergency staff line management cascade system for contacting teams of staff, being notified directly by text when school is to reopen. All staff have been given a copy of the action they must take in the event of adverse weather . **(Appendix 1)**

This system would also be used in the event of a forced school closure due to circumstances that affect the health and safety of the children and staff and the practical running of the school i.e no water or heating.

Alternatively information required to contact OpenCheck is through accessing the school's website. (See details below for parents)

OpenCheck for Parents:

OpenCheck allows parents to check the status of the children's school on any given day. This easy-to-use service presents information regarding school closures in case of emergency, severe weather or any news which may affect children's ability to attend or access the school. It also allows parents to check scheduled school closures and term dates.

The service is free to use* to both schools and parents, and can be accessed via the web or by telephone. OpenCheck is also available via ParentComms: **Mobile** as an app available for all popular smart phones, ensuring that Parents and Carers have a choice of options on how to be kept up to date.

Please use the drop down lists on the left side of webpage to select your child's school and see its status. You can select multiple schools.

- www.southgrove.waltham.sch.uk
- Use OpenCheck link from the home page
- Click on Authority: Waltham Forest
- Type in the School Name: South Grove Primary School
- Click icon: Show Status

Parents with USO accounts can log in and their selected school(s) will be remembered every time they log into the website eliminating the need to perform a search. Parent USO accounts may have been obtained via the eAdmissions application process, registering for a school shop or registering for online reporting.

To use the telephone service available to London Grid for Learning schools, parents can call 020 8408 7508 and enter the school's seven-digit DFE code.(320-2066)

OpenCheck for Schools: System administrators are able to log in using the link in the black bar (on the school's website), to update the school status in the messages visible for their school.

**Using the mobile app may incur data charges from your network provider.*

ParentComms  Access OpenCheck on the go!

Download the ParentComms: **Mobile** app, to access OpenCheck via Apple iPhone™ or Google Android™ smartphones.



This is the poster that is displayed at the School Office, on the school's website and regularly in the Head Teacher's school newsletter to parents to remind all stakeholders where they can check:



Informing the Local Authority and procedures for emergency school closures

Schools are required to follow a verification process before providing school closure information. Once the Headteacher is satisfied that the school be closed to pupils, Schools are required to:

- Undertake a risk assessment, using common sense to determine whether it is feasible for children and staff to remain in the school; and if not, what subsequent risks could arise by sending them home. Before school hours start, schools are also asked to assess if the roads are safe for children to travel to school.
- Seek approval from the Governing Board (usually the decision of the Chair of Governors will suffice) to authorise the decision to close.
- Notify Waltham Forest Council via text message to the emergency telephone number **07760 165076**. The information provided **must** confirm the name of the school, the volume of closure i.e. partial, full or set years/areas of the school and the emergency contact name for the day of closure.

2.0 In the event of Heavy Snow Before the School Day Starts

2.1 Parents

2.1.1 When school closure is a possibility parents should find out whether the school is open by:-

- Checking the NCC Website www.walthamforest.gov.uk/closures to see if South Grove Primary School is in the list of the schools that are closed.
- Looking on the South Grove Primary School's Website at the home page to see the school's open/closed status.
- Check texts messages sent by the school using Parent Pay system

2.1.2 If it is decided that the school will open, but the road conditions are difficult, parents should ring the school to advise that they are likely to be late.

2.1.3 If parents assume that the school is closed, but it is actually open, the absence will be recorded as unauthorized unless the Head Teacher is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances. (See paragraph 2.3.2)

2.2 The school

2.2.1 The Head Teacher will decide whether the school will open taking into account the conditions at the school and the ability of staff to get there.

2.2.2 If the Head Teacher decides the school will close he/she will update the WF Council Website accordingly and send a message to staff and parents via the school's text system advising them of the closure.

2.2.3 The Head Teacher will also ensure that the school's website will be updated to reflect the closure.

It is important for Parents to undertake the action at 2.1 above in case Parent Pay Text system is slow due to the number of schools trying to use it.

2.2.4 The school fully appreciates that in bad weather children may arrive later than usual.

2.2.5 If there are adverse weather conditions in the morning the Head Teacher can allow parents to bring their children to their classrooms early from 8:30am and wait for school to begin at 8:45am. In this

instance all parents and children must enter the school through the normal routes. School staff will supervise the children at this point.

2.3 Exceptional Circumstances

2.3.1 The School recognizes that there may be cases where families are unable to travel due to particular difficulties/circumstances in the area in which they live.

2.3.2 In such cases parents should advise the Head Teacher of their particular circumstances so that it can be justified to the Local Authority why the absence should be approved.

3.0 In the event of heavy snowfall during the school day

3.1 If there is heavy snowfall during the school day the Head Teacher will decide whether it is necessary to close the school.

3.2 The Office will contact parents via Parent Pay texts and ask that they pick their child/children up from school as soon as possible.

3.3 The Staff that live furthest from the school will be permitted to leave at the earliest opportunity.

3.4 A skeleton staff will remain in school until all of the children have been collected.

3.5 If a parent rings requesting they pick their child up early due to the weather, and the decision has not been made to close the school, these requests will be considered on an individual basis by the Head Teacher.

4.0 Wet Morning Breaks

4.1 Staff on duty that day will liaise with the Head Teacher to decide if the weather is bad enough for a 'wet' break.

4.2 If a wet break is declared no children must be left unsupervised. One member of staff (Teaching or Teaching Assistant) should remain in the classroom to supervise break with all children remaining in their own classes.

4.3 Members of staff who stay in the classroom during the wet break can take a break once lessons have resumed.

5.0 Wet Lunchtimes

- 5.1 The Head Teacher will liaise with the MDA Team if the weather is bad enough for a 'wet' lunchtime.
- 5.2 **If a wet lunchtime is declared no children must be left unsupervised.**
- 5.3 The Play Leaders and MDA's will supervise the children in the Main Hall, Classrooms and Dining areas in accordance with the wet lunchtime duty rota in the noticeboard in the Staff corridor.

6.0 Emergency School Closures not due to adverse weather conditions

- 6.1 There may be occasions where the school will need to be closed due to unforeseen circumstances such as no water or heating, although these are rare
- 6.2 The procedures for school closure will remain the same as for adverse weather for parents as shown on pages 2,3 and 4 of this policy
- 6.3 With regard to staff they would be expected to attend school as normal. If the school was unable to resolve the issue within a short period of time then staff would need to leave the premises
- 6.4 During this time they would be expected to support with the communication with parents regarding the school closure
- 6.5 If the school was unable to open for the second day, staff would be notified using the text system and the Line Management Communication system in **Appendix**
- 6.6 The school's Open Check System on the website could also be used



APPENDIX 1

Note to staff regarding severe weather and emergency school closure – January 2017

We will endeavor to keep our school open and operating as normal. However in the event of severe adverse weather or emergency closure, it may be necessary to make a decision to close the school for the safety of the children and staff. Following the Severe Weather Guidance and emergency school closure from the Local Authority (December 2016), the following policy and procedure exists for South Grove School.

The decision to close the school will be made by the Head Teacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors. The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

1. Insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely.
2. Conditions on site are dangerous.
3. Conditions on site are felt to compromise the health and safety of staff and pupils.
4. Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous to travel.

The school's first priority will always be to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff, parents and families.

Where practical, we will consider opening later in order to enable staff and children to have additional time to travel to school safely.

During Adverse Weather We will ensure that entrances to school and paths are clear within school to make access as safe as possible, and work with the Kier team of staff to support this.

School Closure Procedure:

- As soon as a decision has been made staff and parents will be informed via our text service and a message posted on the school website via the OpenCheck service
- Parents and staff are advised to view their website for updates and check text messages
- The school's emergency cascade line management system will also be put into operation to ensure that all staff are updated accurately
- Parents are informed that, where possible, a member of staff will be in school to advise them on arrival that school is closed, and to answer telephone calls from concerned parents.

It is recognized that adverse weather conditions will, at times, make travel to and from work difficult. However, employees are expected to make all reasonable efforts to reach their workplace. In the event of closure, staff will be informed by text and as a safeguard, use the emergency staff line management cascade system for contacting teams of staff, being notified directly by text when school is to reopen.

In emergency closure situations staff are expected to attend school as normal. If the school was unable to resolve the issue within a short period of time then staff would need to leave the premises

During this time they would be expected to support with the communication with parents regarding the school closure

If the school was unable to open for the second day, staff would be notified using the text system and the Line Management Communication system in **Appendix 3**

The school's Open Check System on the website could also be used.



APPENDIX 2

Note to Parents and Families regarding severe weather and emergency school closure – January 2017

We will endeavor to keep our school open and operating as normal. However in the event of severe adverse weather or emergency closure it may be necessary to make a decision to close the school for the safety of the children and staff. Following the Severe Weather Guidance from the Local Authority and emergency closure (December 2016), the following policy and procedure exists for South Grove School.

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During Adverse Weather we will ensure that entrances to school and paths are clear within school to make access as safe as possible, and work with the Kier team of staff to support this.

School Closure Procedure:

- As soon as a decision has been made we will inform you via our ParentPay text service
- The school's closure will be put onto the school's website using **OpenCheck**
- Please use the drop down lists on the left side of this page to select your child's school and see its status. You can select multiple schools.
- www.southgrove.waltham.sch.uk
- Use OpenCheck link from the home page
- Click on Authority: Waltham Forest
- Type in the School Name: South Grove Primary School
- Click icon: Show Status

- Closures will be also listed on the Waltham Forest Council's Website

- Where possible, a member of staff will be in school to advise parents on arrival that the school is closed, and to answer telephone calls.



Appendix 3
SOUTH GROVE PRIMARY CASCADING COMMUNICATION PLAN IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY/SCHOOL CLOSURE
(OUT OF WORKING HOURS)



