



Emergency Closure

The closure of one part or all of the School is a rare event, although the harsher winter conditions in recent years can cause disruption to our services, most notably the coach transport system. It is important that we anticipate the possibility that the School will need to close at short notice¹.

Possible potential causes of closure include, but are not restricted to:

- adverse weather conditions
- flooding
- snow and ice
- no heating or water in our buildings
- fire damage
- high levels of sickness among staff or children
- flu or other pandemic
- a bereavement
- an act of terrorism

These notes are to provide guidance for School staff and families whose children attend the School. In the notes that follow, the use of the word School could be just one of our School sites or more than one, dependent upon the reasons for closure. Ultimately, however, it is for parents to decide if children should leave home for School in bad weather even if the School is open. If you are not going to be home during the day your children should know where they should go and who to contact if the School is required to close.

Please note the **Channels of Information** section below on how advice will be provided to parents.

Place of Safety

The School will remain a place of safety for those children who arrive at School and have no way of going home.

The Main Criteria for Closing the School are:

The health and safety risks incurred by:

- expecting staff and pupils to travel to School or stay at School.
- the inability of the School to function due to significant travel disruption or other reasons consistent with the headline cause. For example, we could be directed to close the School by the Health Authority because of pandemic.

Closing the School before Normal Session Time

The School's Principals will make an early assessment of any poor weather situation and ensure the appropriate channels are utilised so the School community is informed effectively and promptly to avoid any potential travel risk for all, but especially those families and staff who travel considerable distances.

Channels of Information

Text message and email. Whenever the School will not open for the day we will always endeavour to contact parents **before** school and as early as possible.

A text message and supporting email will be sent to all parents and staff by the School to the contact details we hold for your child. If bad weather is imminent, please check your mobile phones and email. Updates will be provided throughout the day if appropriate.

Website. The School website will also be updated as soon as a decision has been taken. Parents and staff should check the website regularly and our emergency closure postings page, the School social media channels will also be used to disseminate information:

Website: www.clairescourt.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/clairescourt

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/clairescourt>

Google Classroom provides us with a convenient way of setting work etc. as well as communicating with smaller groups of pupils and staff. In this circumstances where it is possible to provide on-line live teaching via Google Meet, specific details will be provided. On the first day of such an emergency closure of the School, live school would normally be available from 10am onwards, with the school day commencing with Form Teacher briefing via Google Meet via the link to be found on their Form Google Classroom.

Regular updates. These same channels of communication will be used to inform staff and pupils/parents when the School will re-open. Staff and parents should check these channels regularly. Further procedures may be introduced should closure become a regular threat.

Closing the School during Session Time

Closing the School once it is in session can be more problematic. However, our aim always is to ensure pupils arrive home safely into the care of a parent or responsible person available to receive them. Specifically, the School will assess the risk to pupils:

- whether your child will be able to get home safely
- the safety and viability of school transport
- that there will be someone at home to meet them

The more practical issue will be the availability of buses to take pupils home earlier than the contracted time. In conjunction with our transport providers and prevailing local weather conditions, we will communicate our decision via the '**Channels of Information**' above.

Where necessary we will provide every opportunity for pupils to make contact with their parents or carers. In the case of younger children, we will make direct contact with their parents or carers.

James Wilding - Academic Principal
Updated December 2023

¹Following each day of snow closure, or closure of bus services for the day in question, we review the nature of the closure and any lessons to be learned. The most important request from parents arising from the reviews is that the School makes an early decision, which enables parents to plan appropriately.