



St. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra NS *Emergency Closures Policy*

Introduction:

The school policy on emergency closures was drafted as a whole school exercise, involving parents, pupils, staff and Board of Management. It was circulated to the entire school community via the school's website.

Rationale:

The need for the school to produce a policy on emergency closures is primarily due to the following possible situations;

- Loss of water, lighting or heating supply
- Inclement weather, such as heavy snowfalls, high winds etc.
- Building programmes and alterations to the design of the school, which could necessitate unscheduled closures on Health and Safety grounds

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 comply with Health and Safety legislation

Procedures

Heavy Snowfall:

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

If it is decided to close the school, the school authorities will endeavor to contact all parents via text informing them of the school closure and our local radio station, Galway Bay FM, will be contacted by the Chairperson or principal making use of a special code supplied to the school and request that regular announcements be carried on the airwaves that the school will not be open.

If the snowfall is prolonged over a number of days and the school is closed indefinitely, parents will be informed of re-opening dates by text from the school and through an announcement on local radio station Galway Bay FM

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 via text and email to all parents.

High Winds/Thunderstorms:

The procedures in place for heavy snowfall are generally replicated in the event of storms/lightning i.e. the school will endeavour to contact parents via text and through an announcement on local radio informing 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 the children have been collected by either parents/guardians or emergency contact persons as notified by parents at enrolment.

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, BoM member or pupil. Parents are informed of such closures either by text and/or email. In this particular instance, the school may remain open to staff and BoM or Parents Association if issues such as church services, Guards of honour, readings or counselling is required (See Critical Incident Policy).

Please note:

All half days and early closures are notified to parents on the school calendar at the beginning of the year and reminders are sent at least one week in advance.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Emergency closures in the school place particular responsibilities on various personnel within the school chain of command;

Chairperson, Principal, Deputy Principal, Special Duties Post Holders & School Secretary

Ratification and Communication:

This policy is now in operation having been communicated by the BoM through the school's website following ratification at the school BoM meeting on January 15th 2013