



## **SEVERE WEATHER SCHOOL CLOSURE PLAN**

It is school policy to remain open but in exceptional circumstances consideration would need to be given to school closure. **All updates will be on the school website – home page.**

This plan has been drawn up in the light of guidance issued by the Dept. of Education.

The most important factor to consider is the safety of those in our school community, students and staff, as well as parents and visitors on site. Parents and staff must make their own decision as to the safety of travelling to school in severe weather conditions.

### **Precautions**

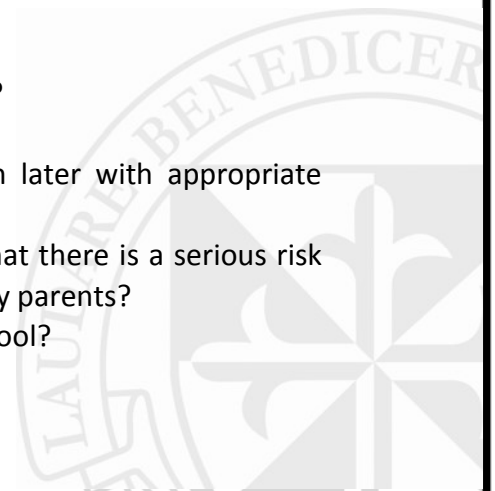
Facing the possibility of severe weather, the School Facilities Manager will ensure winter servicing of the school minibuses and the gritting of school walkways. Reasonable precautions are not however designed to replace sound decision making in the face of severe difficulties.

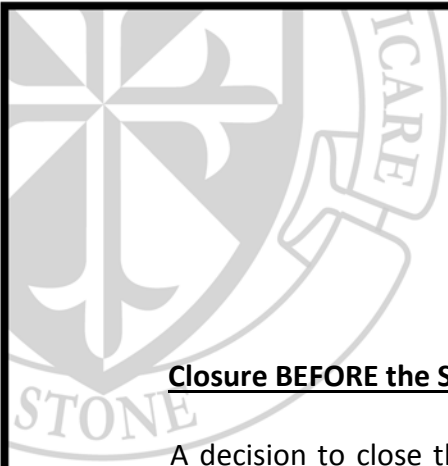
### **Who makes the decision to shut the school?**

The Headteacher (or in her absence the Head of Prep / Deputy Head) in consultation with the Facilities Manager.

### **Criteria to be applied?**

- 1) Is the site deemed to be safe?
- 2) What are the physical weather conditions within the school's notional catchment area?
- 3) Is the heating working?
- 4) Is the water running?
- 5) Is there adequate provision for hot meals and drinks?
- 6) Are there satisfactory staffing levels?
- 7) Is there the possibility that the school could open later with appropriate staffing levels?
- 8) Are conditions expected to deteriorate further so that there is a serious risk that it could be difficult for children to be collected by parents?
- 9) Are children and/ or staff already on their way to school?





**Closure BEFORE the School is opened:**

A decision to close the school must take into account the above criteria and must also consider whether it is possible to keep one part of the school open to provide supervision for those children who can get to school, even if the normal curriculum cannot be delivered.

Staff who can get into school e.g. by walking to school, are expected to do so. It is accepted that not all staff will live close enough to school for this to be possible. The decision by a member of staff to drive to school for the normal opening time or to arrive later is the decision of the member of staff concerned as they are the only person able to evaluate their own particular circumstances.

A decision for school transport to leave early or to be withdrawn has to be taken in the light of:

- 1) the prevailing national road network conditions and on site conditions
- 2) information being received by other local schools and from local weather and transport information services
- 3) consultation with, and availability of the school minibus drivers.

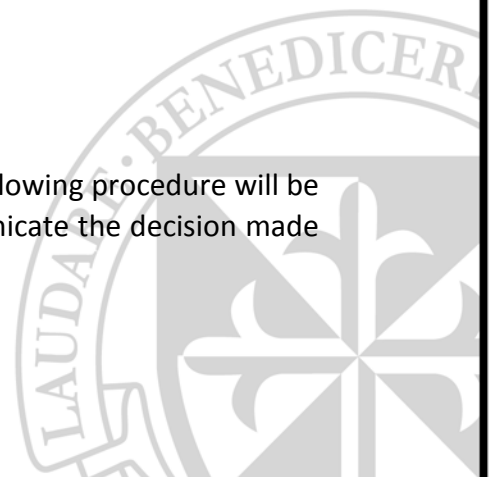
**Closure AFTER the School has been opened:**

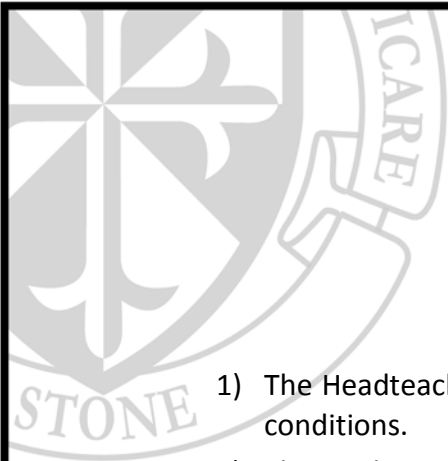
A decision to close the school once open in extreme weather conditions, must take into account:

1. the need to get pupils and staff home
2. the likelihood of conditions getting worse e.g. if heavy
3. and the local weather forecast indicates that the situation will deteriorate further.

**School Closure Communication Procedure:**

Upon the presentation of severe weather conditions, the following procedure will be followed to both establish the correct decision and communicate the decision made to both staff and parents:





- 1) The Headteacher will contact the Facilities Manager to discuss the prevailing conditions.
- 2) The Facilities Manager will assess the site based on the criteria to be applied as detailed above.
- 3) If the site **is accessible and fit for purpose** on the day, the decision will be made to keep the school open and the notification of decision made will be posted on the school's website.
- 4) If the site **is not accessible and not fit for purpose** on the day, the decision will be made to close the school and the notification of the decision made will be posted on the school's website.
- 5) The Headteacher will inform the Chair of Governors of any decision made to close the school.
- 6) Website messages will be the responsibility of the Marketing Department, under advice from both the Headteacher and the Facilities Manager.
- 7) All staff to follow procedures outlined by their line managers.

**In the event of the school being closed after pupils and staff have arrived at school, parents will be contacted via the School Office – individually by telephone and by general email. As stated above a message will also be posted on the school website.**

***Where there is doubt as to whether the school is open e.g. after a day's closure due to bad weather, a message will be put on the school website to say that the school is now open or remains closed.***

**Document Owners; Headteacher and Facilities Manager**

***Date reviewed; December 2017***

***Date of next review; December 2018***

