

Hillcrest Primary School



Emergency Closure Policy

Date	Review Date	Coordinator	Nominated Governor
June 26	June 28	Headteacher	Chair

1. Purpose

Hillcrest Primary School is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for pupils, staff and visitors while maintaining continuity of education wherever possible.

The school recognises that exceptional circumstances may arise which prevent normal operations. This policy outlines the arrangements for responding to emergencies that may require partial or full closure of the school.

The school will make every reasonable effort to remain open wherever it is safe and practicable to do so. Before considering full closure, the school will explore alternative arrangements including:

- Partial opening for specific year groups or vulnerable pupils.
- Reduced operating hours.
- Reorganisation of staffing and pupil groupings.
- Remote learning provision.
- Temporary relocation of activities where appropriate.

2. Scope

This policy applies to emergencies including, but not limited to:

- Severe weather.
- Sustained staffing shortages resulting from widespread infectious disease.
- Utilities and local service disruption.
- Building failures or site safety concerns.
- Transport disruption, including fuel shortages or driver shortages.
- Widespread pupil absence due to infectious disease and any requirement for deep cleaning.
- Any other circumstance that presents a significant risk to the health, safety or welfare of pupils, staff or visitors.

3. Principles

The following principles will guide all decisions:

1. The safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors is paramount.
2. Every effort will be made to keep the school open safely.
3. Educational disruption will be minimised wherever possible.
4. Decisions will be based on risk assessment and available information.
5. Communication with families and staff will be timely and clear.
6. Vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs will be considered when determining arrangements.

4. Authority to Close the School

The Headteacher has delegated authority to make decisions regarding emergency closure.

In the absence of the Headteacher, responsibility will pass to:

Deputy Headteacher

Assistant Headteacher

The Chair of Governors/Trust Representative will be informed as soon as practicable of any closure decision.

5. Decision-Making Process

Before deciding to close, the Headteacher will consider:

- Health and safety risks.
- Staffing levels and supervision requirements.
- Accessibility and safety of the school site.
- Availability of essential services.
- Weather forecasts and local authority guidance.
- Transport availability.
- Ability to provide education safely and effectively.
- Impact on vulnerable pupils.

A risk assessment will be completed and reviewed throughout the incident.

6. Communication Arrangements

The school will communicate closure information through:

- Messaging system.
- Email communication.
- School social media account (Facebook)

- Norfolk County Council School Closure System (http://disruptions.norfolk.gov.uk/nccclosures_schools.html)
- Parent communication app (My Child at School)

Parents are responsible for ensuring that the school has up-to-date emergency contact details.

Where possible, decisions regarding morning closures will be made before **7:30am**.

7. Remote Learning Arrangements

Where closure is expected to continue beyond a short period, remote learning arrangements will be implemented to ensure continuity of education.

Home Learning Timetables

From Day 2 of any closure, home learning timetables will be shared with parents and carers via:

- Email
- Tapestry (EYFS, Year 1 & Year 2)
- The school website

Timetables will be published by **8:55am** each day.

Class email addresses will be included with the timetable so that pupils and families can submit completed work and ask questions. EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 families should continue to use Tapestry as their primary platform for sharing learning, although email addresses will also be provided.

Staff Availability and Feedback

During periods of home learning:

- Staff will monitor class email accounts and Tapestry between **8:55am and 3:30pm** on school days.
- Staff will respond to queries, provide support and acknowledge pupils' learning during these hours.
- Work submitted during the school day will be responded to where possible within the same day.
- Any work submitted after **3:30pm** will receive a response and acknowledgement by **8:30am on the next working day**.

Continuing Closure

Should the closure continue for additional days, this cycle of timetable publication, learning activities, communication and feedback will be repeated daily until normal school operations resume.

8. Severe Weather

Examples

- Snow and ice.
- Flooding.
- High winds.
- Extreme temperatures.
- Severe storms.
- Fog affecting transport.

Factors to Consider

- Safety of pupils, staff and visitors travelling to and from school.
- Ability to maintain safe staffing levels.
- Site accessibility.
- Condition of roads, footpaths and entrances.
- Forecast deterioration during the school day.
- Availability of heating, water and catering services.

Control Measures

The school will:

- Monitor weather forecasts and alerts.
- Maintain supplies of grit/salt where appropriate.
- Risk assess pedestrian routes.
- Clear and treat essential pathways/playgrounds where practicable.
- Restrict access to unsafe areas.
- Consider delayed opening, reduced hours or partial closure before full closure.

If conditions deteriorate during the day, the school may close early to allow safe travel home.

For periods of extreme heat, if classroom temperatures reach 30°C during the school day, parents and carers will be informed that they may collect their children if they wish; however, the school will remain open. These high temperatures will also be taken into consideration when deciding whether the school should close the following day.

9. Sustained Staffing Shortages Due to Infectious Disease

Examples include:

- Influenza outbreaks.
- COVID-19 or similar respiratory illnesses.
- Other widespread infectious diseases affecting staffing levels.

The school will:

- Monitor staffing capacity daily.

- Reorganise staffing where safe and appropriate.
- Prioritise safeguarding and supervision requirements.
- Consider combining classes where risk assessments permit.
- Consider partial opening arrangements.
- Implement remote learning where necessary.

Closure will only be considered where staffing levels are insufficient to operate safely.

10. Utilities and Local Service Disruption

Examples include:

- Power failure.
- Water supply interruption.
- Heating failure.
- Sewerage issues.
- Catering service disruption.
- ICT or communications failure.

The Headteacher will assess:

- Whether essential services remain available.
- The expected duration of disruption.
- Weather conditions.
- Impact on health and safety.

Possible responses include:

- Continuing operations with modified arrangements.
- Restricting access to affected areas.
- Partial closure.
- Reduced opening hours.
- Full closure if safe operation cannot be maintained.

11. Building Issues

Examples include:

- Structural damage.
- Fire damage.
- Roof failure.
- Flooding.
- Asbestos concerns.
- Unsafe classrooms or facilities.

The school will:

- Seek advice from relevant specialists.
- Restrict access to affected areas.
- Undertake emergency repairs where possible.
- Consider relocation within the site.
- Consider partial closure before full closure.

No area will be occupied if deemed unsafe.

12. Transport Disruption

Examples include:

- School transport shortages.
- Driver shortages.
- Fuel supply disruption.
- Road closures.
- Significant public transport disruption.

The school will assess:

- Numbers of pupils and staff able to attend.
- Impact on safeguarding and supervision.
- Availability of alternative arrangements.

Possible responses include:

- Adjusted start or finish times.
- Partial opening.
- Limited-hour operation.
- Remote learning arrangements.
- Full closure where attendance levels create unacceptable risk.

13. Widespread Pupil Absence and Deep Cleaning Requirements

Where significant numbers of pupils are absent due to infectious disease, the school will:

- Monitor attendance patterns.
- Liaise with relevant health authorities where appropriate.
- Reinforce infection prevention measures.
- Increase cleaning regimes where necessary.

If deep cleaning is required, the school may:

- Close affected areas.
- Close specific classes or groups.
- Implement remote learning.
- Undertake a full closure if operationally necessary.

Any closure will be proportionate to the assessed risk.

14. Emergency Closure During the School Day

If an emergency arises requiring closure during the school day:

1. Parents/carers will be informed as quickly as possible.
2. Pupils will remain supervised until collected or safely dismissed.
3. Emergency contacts will be used where required.
4. Staff will remain on duty until all pupils are accounted for.
5. Vulnerable pupils will receive additional support as necessary.

No pupil will be sent home unless appropriate arrangements are in place.

15. Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

Responsible for:

- Risk assessment.
- Decision-making.
- Liaison with external agencies.
- Communication with families and staff.

Staff

Responsible for:

- Following emergency procedures.
- Supporting communication arrangements.
- Delivering remote learning where required.
- Maintaining pupil welfare and safeguarding.

Parents and Carers

Responsible for:

- Maintaining up-to-date contact details.
- Monitoring communication channels.
- Making arrangements for collection where necessary.
- Supporting remote learning where possible.

Governors

Responsible for:

- Monitoring implementation of this policy.

- Supporting strategic planning and review.

16. Monitoring and Review

Following any emergency closure, the school will conduct a review to evaluate:

- Effectiveness of decision-making.
- Communication arrangements.
- Remote learning provision.
- Health and safety arrangements.
- Lessons learned.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required by changes in legislation, guidance or operational experience.

Appendix A – School-Specific Procedures

The following sections should be completed and reviewed annually:

Communication Systems

School MIS System – MCAS

Email

Remote Learning Platforms

Home Learning Timetables incl. Times Table Rock Stars, Oak National Academy, My Maths

Delegated Decision Makers

Headteacher, then Deputy Headteacher, then Assistant Headteacher.

Site Management Arrangements

Mr Dunne – Site Manager

Key Local Authority Reporting Requirements

http://disruptions.norfolk.gov.uk/nccclosures_schools.html