

Emergency Closures Policy

Introduction

The school policy on emergency closures was drafted on 16th March '07. It will be circulated to all parents in March and was ratified at May 2007 B.O.M. meeting. This policy was reviewed during Term 1 2019.

Rationale

The need for the school to devise a policy on emergency closures in recent years is primarily due to

- Upgrading of the ESB network on a phased basis which has led to supplies being disconnected on a number of occasions in recent years
- Inclement weather, such as heavy snowfalls, high winds etc.
- Building programmes and alterations to the design of the school which may necessitate unscheduled closures on Health and Safety grounds
- Critical incidents

Relationship to School Ethos

St.Michael's National School strives to provide a child friendly, secure environment catering for all the needs of all children as far as is practicable and where respect is fostered in a culture which values diversity and difference.

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 conform with Health and Safety regulations

Procedures

Heavy Snowfalls

In the event of a heavy snowfall, the Principal shall consult with the Chairman of the B.O.M. as soon as is feasible, and a decision is 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 contact all the parents/guardians/teachers who supply the school with up-to-date mobile numbers via textaparent service. If the snowfall is prolonged over a number of days and the school is closed indefinitely, parents and bus operators will be informed of re-opening dates through text-a-Parent.

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 letter or text. It is not the policy of the school to confirm such closures through the local radio station. If the loss of service occurs during the school day textaparent service will be utilized if the decision is taken to close the school. Teachers will remain on the premises until all children have been collected by either parents/guardians or childminders.

High Wind/ Thunderstorms

The procedures in place for heavy snowfall are generally replicated in the event of storms/ lightning i.e. parents and bus operators are contacted via text and informed 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 children have been collected by either parents/guardians or childminders.

Critical Incident/ Death

In some instances the school will remain closed for pupils in the event of a critical incident or death of a staff member, pupil or BOM member. Parents are informed of such closures either by letter or text, whichever is appropriate. In this particular instance, the school may remain open to staff and B.O.M. or Parents Association or Critical Incident committee if issues such as church services, liaison with media or counselling are required (See Critical Incident Policy).

Roles and responsibilities

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

- Parents are responsible for keeping school briefed on up-to-date contact details during school year

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- Principal is responsible for organizing annual review of parents contact details
- School secretary Rosie is responsible for entering review information on textparent service and Aladdin
- Chairperson and Principal are responsible for ultimate decision to close the school.
- Health and Safety Officers at staff and Board level are responsible for advising Principal and Board of Management regarding breaches of Health and Safety Policy which may merit school closure.
- Principal is responsible for notifying staff of unplanned closures
- Principal is responsible for notifying parents/ guardians of school closures.

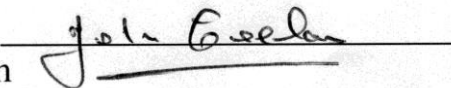
Success Criteria

- Positive school community feedback
- Conformance with Health & Safety legislation
- Maintaining a safe school environment for all staff, children and parents

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified at B.O.M. meeting on 24th of May 07. Policy was reviewed Term 1 2019.

Date next review: Term 1 2023

Signed : 
Fr Geelan

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