

St. Eoghan's P.S. Moneyneena



**School Closure Policy in the
Event of Exceptional Circumstances**

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It is the policy of the school to make every effort to remain open whenever possible. The decision to close the school either before or during the school day will be made by the Principal. The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

1. Insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely (acceptable PTR).

2. Conditions on site are dangerous:

- Can pupils and staff access the school building safely?
- Can pupils and staff be evacuated in an emergency?
- In an emergency, could the Emergency services access the school?
- Is the area designated for disembarkation from transport safe for pupils?

3. Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous for travel.

Following a detailed Risk Assessment carried out by the Principal, if the school is to close:

1. The closure will be reported to CCMS, Education Authority (North-Eastern Region) and DENI by the Principal. This information will be displayed to the public via the school's website: www.steoghansps.com and using the school social media site – Twitter - [@steoghans](https://twitter.com/steoghans)

The media (BBC Radio Ulster, Downtown Radio, Cool FM) will be informed and *might* then broadcast details.

2. Parents will be alerted to the closure using the 'Call Parents' Text service activated by the Principal once the closure has been logged with the Education Authority. The school will make all practicable efforts to keep parents informed as to the situation with the school during adverse weather conditions, as we appreciate that such conditions and the uncertainty places very considerable difficulties upon parents. However parents are expected to check their text messages (named contact only), the website and/or make themselves aware of the radio broadcasts when it is clear that a closure is a possibility.

3. The school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal; parents should endeavour to contact the school to let them know they are on their way if likely to be delayed. The school recognises there will be isolated

instances where families are cut off, even where the clear majority of children can get into school. In such instances parents should inform the school of the circumstances of this exceptional situation, as the school has a duty to clarify the circumstances of each case so as to be able to formally authorise the absence to the Education and Welfare Service. Parents acting on the assumption that the school would be closed without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevents the child coming into school risks their child being registered as an unauthorised absence.

4. Parents should ensure their children know what to do if transport provision is late or does not arrive and, if required, have suitable alternative arrangements in place to ensure the safe transportation of their to and from school. During periods of severe weather school transport providers will only operate where it is safe to do so and your child/children may be required to use a different bus stop. If the morning school transport journey does not operate and you decide to take your own children to school, then you must also be prepared to collect them at the end of the school day if the school transport is still unavailable.

5. Where it is possible, if the school has to close the bus will be asked to come earlier. As the bus arrives, pupils will be escorted to it and remaining pupils will be supervised until the bus run is complete and all who travel by car have been collected

6. Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorised absence. In the event of the school having to close during the day due to unforeseen worsening weather or similar unforeseen circumstances, parents will be contacted by text service and asked to collect their child/ren. Such an early release will only be contemplated in very extreme circumstances.

7. In the event of snow some pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents, children and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. Children will also be reminded of this in upon entry to the school.

8. Before and after school opening hours parents are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide on the school playground.

In icy conditions the caretaker will salt wide pathways as follows:

- A) From the front pedestrian gate to the front door.
- B) From the front pedestrian gate to the back door entrance.
- C) From the front pedestrian gate to the mobile
- D) From the An Rath Dubh path and around to the medical room entrance.

Where necessary, essential pathways will be maintained as clear as possible and salted, throughout the day.

9. On school days where the school is closed to pupils, the pathway will still be maintained during snow and ice weather on a daily basis by the caretaker, so as to keep the pathways clear and prevent build-up of ice and snow.

10. During significant adverse weather conditions, the School Hall will be open as normal from 8.40am for parents to bring their children inside. All parents should enter the school with their child directly by the front entrance, and report to the office before taking their child into the hall. The children will be supervised in the hall by the duty classroom assistant.

Staff are ready to formally take supervision of the children from 9.10am.

11. During adverse weather conditions, the junior and senior playgrounds may be out of bounds to children at break and dinner time, and if the Principal decides it necessary.

12. In the Principal's absence the Senior Teacher (Miss Convery) on site will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to the Adverse Weather Policy.

Approved by Governors 21st January 2016.

For review in January 2018

Signed: _____

Date: _____