



Abbas and Templecombe
Church of England Primary School
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EMERGENCY CLOSURE POLICY

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Consultation	This Policy has been prepared in line with Somerset Council guidelines for school closures.

1. Taking the Decision to Close the School

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in consultation with other members of staff will take the decision to make an emergency closure when the state of the weather or any other exceptional circumstance make it absolutely necessary in the best interests of the pupils and staff.

However this decision will be supported by the latest and most accurate information available. The presumption should be in favour of keeping the school open unless, in the SLT's view, to do so would put the health, safety and welfare of pupils and/or staff at risk. In reaching this decision, the SLT will take full account of local circumstances and, in particular, the following considerations:

- (a) Both short and longer term weather information: further information on this will be sought from the Somerset Local Authority Schools website and BBC local weather updates. Attention should be paid to ascertaining what would be a safe and appropriate time to send pupils and staff home.
- (b) Advice regarding local transport and the safety of local roads: whether buses and trains are running, and whether it is safe to drive on local roads.
- (c) Arrangements for pupil safety: the absolute priority is to ensure that provision is made for each and every child. Where children cannot be collected immediately, they will be kept at school and supervised until collection can take place.
- (d) Whether the school is accessible, and has working heating/electrics/water.

The closure or opening of other schools in the proximity will not be the key factor in taking decisions, although this may be taken into account. It is the responsibility of all staff to make every effort to attend for duty.

ADVICE TO PARENTS

It is recognised that parents have a key role to play in the event of severe weather. If they have concerns about bringing their children to and from school, they too should “play safe” and keep them at home, informing the school that they are doing so. The fact that several parents take this view does not, however, mean that the school will be closed, unless the considerations listed above indicate that this is the only sensible decision.

2. Communication Arrangements

It is essential that, when there is potential for school closures due to severe weather conditions, we are in a position to communicate quickly and clearly with parents.

Our school website is an important information channel in these situations. Any decision to close should be taken as early in the day as possible, or if feasible, notification should be provided the evening before. The Emergency School Closure procedure should be used to communicate the decision. This will involve putting an announcement on the website and on local radio for parents, and telephoning staff.

3. Closure during the school day

Emergency Contacts

Safe and speedy dismissal of pupils in the event of an emergency closure depends on the school and parents working in partnership.

Parents should provide the school with any specific instructions in respect of their child should the school require to close during the day. Parents are required to give the school an emergency contact and ensure this is kept up to date.

Precautions

It may be that a parent who collects his/her children offers to give shelter to other children. The agreement of the parents of these children should be sought before releasing pupils in this way but please be aware of the social distancing guidelines and implications of mixing bubbles during the covid pandemic.

The provision of adequate supervision by members of school staff will be made for those pupils who cannot go home immediately and therefore have to remain at school.

SCHOOL CLOSURE PROCEDURE


An initial assessment of the school site and conditions is made by a nominated member of staff. The decision to close the school is a local management decision made by the SLT in consultation with the Chair of Governors. Once a decision has been made, the school must notify the Local Authority through the following method:


1. The Office Manager will log on to the Somerset Learning Platform: <https://slp.somerset.org.uk/SitePages/Home.aspx> with their user name and password. Add a new notice in the School Closure section towards the bottom of the page: (school name and town/village). Reason for school closure should read: 'Abbas & Templecombe Primary School is closed today due to _____. The school hopes to reopen on _____'. This message will inform Transporting Somerset, Support Service for Education and SCC senior officers and the SCC Communications team.

If the platform does not work, then closure should be notified by:

- Contacting the Local Authority (Compact Business Support Team): 01823 355953/07585 307010 or 01823 355759 (Steve Dorrall or James Mitchell-Cassell – who will communicate closures across the LA and members).
 - If the SLP or the Local Authority contacts above are unavailable, please email your closure to PressOffice@somerset.gov.uk with details of your closure/partial closure. They will publish this information on the Somerset County Council website and arrange an update on the SLP.
2. The SLT will communicate with class teachers, teaching assistants and the office staff as early as possible to prevent unnecessary travel – this will be done via a WhatsApp message. If staff are unsure they can follow step 3 below.
 3. The Office Manager will place a message on the Homepage of the school website for parents and staff to remain updated. Parents should check our school website for updates and/or listen to the local radio stations.

School Closure – Cascade Procedure

MB or MM (duty day)  Site Manager
Chair of Governors
Teachers,

MG  TAs/Admin staff/MDSAs via WhatsApp message
SLP
Website
Piskula – Hot School Meals

EMERGENCY CLOSURE PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS

Here are the procedures which will come into operation if the school has to close for an emergency, for example, due to extreme weather:

- If the decision is made to close the school during the school day, parents/carers will be informed by our email@school service. **Please make sure that our school office knows if your email address changes!**
- Please rest assured that members of staff will, of course, remain on site while any children are present if the closure takes place during the school day.
- If the decision is made to close the school before the school day, this will be indicated on the Home Page of our school website (www.abbastemplecombeprimary.co.uk).
- If the decision is made to close the school this will be shared with the following Radio Stations:

BBC – Somerset Sound. 95.5 FM, 1566 MHz
Heart FM. 102.6 FM, 97.1 FM (Yeovil Area), 96.5 FM (Taunton Area)
Breeze FM. 100.8 FM, 102.4 FM, or 107.4 FM
Tone FM 107.8 FM (Taunton & surrounding areas)

The radio stations have said that this information might be posted on their websites rather than read out 'on air' because of the volume of schools which can be affected.

There are, quite rightly, certain rules/procedures which the SLT and Chair of Governors have to follow when making any decision to close the school, but please be assured that they will always endeavour to inform everyone as swiftly as possible. The decision is also one for each school to make individually and the specific circumstances in each school will inevitably mean that schools may announce their decisions at different times and some may open whilst others close.