



ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL
"Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community"

EMERGENCY CLOSURE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

We appreciate the important role our schools play in the life of the local community. We also take health and safety of our school community very seriously. This Emergency Closure Policy and Procedures reflects our commitment to both of these aspects. By nature it is designed to be short, concise and informative. A much more comprehensive and detailed document 'Critical Incident Policy & Business Continuity' is also available upon request.

There may be occasions (e.g. severe weather conditions) when it will be necessary to consider closing the school. The following action would normally be taken:

In all circumstances, the Headteachers of both the Infant and Junior School will initially consult over any appropriate action – in the case of snowy conditions this is approximately at 6am via telephone. Generally, other staff are also consulted including: caretaker, other members of SLT (in poor weather, those living in Brentwood provide particularly useful insights). The Chair of Governors for each school will also be consulted.

The first consideration is the safety of the children. In snow, arriving into Sawyers Hall Lane can be treacherous and the school site can be impossible to make safe at short notice.

Secondly, the number of staff available for duty needs to be considered. In snowy conditions, the local road conditions must be considered and can be variable.

If the Headteachers (after appropriate consultation, as described above) decide to close the school the following actions will be taken:

- 1). Inform staff – in person, via telephone tree and/or text message.
- 2). Inform parents – in person, via school website, telephone, text message, answer machine and Local Authority website. (see 3 below)
- 3). Inform Local Authority – via Essex Schools Infolink (ESI)

We have now been informed that the local radio stations will **no longer** be announcing or publicising via websites the school closures lists. Instead Essex County Council will be using a new notification system via a secure reporting function on Essex Schools Infolink (ESI) designed to improve informing Essex County Council and parents of closures.

All schools will be able to complete a short notification either on the day or the day before the closure via the secure access area on ESI. Once the notification is submitted a live feed will appear on the www.essex.gov.uk website so parents can stay informed. Closure lists on the Essex website will constantly update as and when notifications are received. Closure lists for the next day will go live the night before so parents can plan ahead. We are being requested to direct parents to check the Essex County Council website for closure information. In addition, we will continue to use other means as mentioned above.

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