



Short Notice School Closure Plan



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Short Notice School Closure Plan

Owing to a Significant Incident or Adverse Weather

Purpose and Aims

This plan covers the contingencies made for significant incidents and adverse weather which may result in enforced school closure or restricted opening at short notice.

A significant incident may include:

- Utilities failures such as power cuts, water supply or heating failure
- The inability for the majority of staff to travel to school
- A major demonstration or event in the local area
- Data services failure

Adverse weather may include:

- Heavy snow and ice
- Dangerous storms and high winds
- Severe flooding

For information regarding evacuation and school closure owing to a critical incident or tragedy such as fire, a bomb scare or an intruder, refer to the Critical Incident Plan and Lockdown Policy.

This plan aims to prevent:

- The stranding of pupils and staff
- Unnecessary risks travelling to and from school through good communication
- Excessive impact on children's education by alternative means of support
- Health and safety issues and accidents in the school through good risk assessment

It is our intention that the school will be open on all normal school days whenever possible, even during adverse weather conditions, when some poor road conditions exist. However, in the event of a heavy snowfall for example, we cannot guarantee that staff will be able to travel to school or they may become stranded, therefore a decision to close or restrict school opening may have to be made. There may be some occasions when little warning will be given of a significant issue which may result in partial or full closure, such as a complete power cut or entire water supply failure. This plan will minimise the disruption caused by such short notice events.

Decisions and Steps

The decision to close or partially close the school will be taken by the Head/ Deputy Head. Should the incident or weather occur before regular school opening times, the decision will attempt to be made by 7:30am at the latest.

Step 1: Adverse weather or major events/ demonstrations are usually forecast. The Head/ Deputy Head and a member of the premises team will check the forecast on regular intervals through the evening before and early morning. Utility failure is sometimes reported by neighbours and families living close to the school site. Should this be the case, regular checks will be made at school by a member of staff during the evening and at 06:00.

Step 2: If it appears that the school will be affected by a significant incident or severe weather, staff will be warned via email and text to prepare resources for potential online teaching the following/same day.

Step 3: If safe and possible to do so, a member of staff will be on site by 06:00 to check whether it is viable to open school safely to pupils and staff. This member of staff will liaise with the Head/Deputy Head and the situation will be fully risk assessed.

Step 4: If utilities are affected, the Head/ Deputy Head will contact the relevant provider to request an urgent response. If the school site has been affected by adverse weather conditions, the premises team will be assigned to assess whether it is possible to make the site safe for children to attend, reporting back to the Head/ Deputy Head.

Step 5: Depending on the outcomes of Step 4, the Head will assign:

- 2 members of the SLT to pursue alternative options for opening in the absence of that utility/ area affected by adverse weather.
- 2 members of the SLT to communicate with teaching staff regarding online learning, including notifying VMTs and club providers.
- 1 member of the SLT to liaise with a member of the admin team to contact parents, including those with children who attend breakfast club. (See further information regarding parent communication below).
- Head/ Deputy Head to contact the catering team.

Step 6: Reassess steps 3 and 4 throughout the day and update staff and parents as necessary in order to reopen as soon as safely possible to do so.

Communication

If the incident or weather conditions are severe enough to force closure or restricted opening, this decision will be communicated by the following means:

- Announcement via Prep Post (SMS and Email)
- Via the school website on the home page and on MSP (MySchoolPortal)
- Via social media (e.g. Instagram and X)
- Updates will follow to parents via Prep Post

Additional means of communication:

- An answer phone message will be on the main school phone line: 020 8858 0692. In the event of full school closure, lines will be diverted to a member of the admin team to respond to calls during school hours.
- The office emails will be checked, and responses sent where possible: info@blackheathprep.co.uk

Partial Opening

Where school is open, but some staff may be unable to attend or where weather conditions may prevent some pupils from attending, parents will be informed about changes to pupil timetables and arrangements via Prep Post. At the end of the day, the children will be dismissed as usual but there will be no after-school clubs or Late Stay provision. When school has reopened fully, the co-curricular programme should resume as usual unless otherwise informed.

Parents may be asked to arrange for their children to bring lunches and wear alternative clothing in the event of adverse weather. This information will be communicated via Prep Post.

Full School Closure

Once a decision is made to close school fully, the school phonenumber is likely to be very busy and it may not be possible to get through so parents are requested to use the means of communication outlined above instead.

During school closure, Steps 1-6 will be repeated as necessary until we are able to reopen as normal.

Parents will be updated with plans for reopening as soon as new information is available. The school will make every effort to reopen as soon as safely possible to do so.

Unexpected Closure during the School Day

If pupils and staff have arrived to school as usual and a significant incident or adverse weather forces the decision to close the school, parents will be contacted by text and Prep Post in the first instance, with information on our

website, MSP and social media to follow. Parents and carers will be asked to collect their children as soon as possible and after school clubs and Late Stay will be cancelled.

Pupils in Year 5 and 6 who have pass cards to leave the site without an adult will only be allowed to leave when a parent has verbally given permission for this to happen and if the school staff deem it safe for the children to leave school unaccompanied by an adult. If a parent cannot be contacted, their child will remain in school supervised by members of staff, until they are collected. In this instance, parents will be asked to keep regular contact with the school regarding their expected time of collection.

Arrangements for Online Learning

Depending on whether the School has been forewarned, e.g. snow has been forecast, on Day 1 of school closure, online learning will commence as early as possible.

The plan for Online Learning will be shared via our communication with parents and through Tapestry and Microsoft Teams. Login details for pupils to access Microsoft Teams will be re-circulated and access support will be provided by the school if required.

If school is partially open but parents choose not to bring their children to school, they must make contact with the office to log their child's absence. If the reasons are viable, such as unsafe or severely affected travel to the school site, pupils in Prep-Prep and Prep may be set work via MS Teams if appropriate and possible for teaching staff to do so. Depending on the circumstances and notice, it may not be possible for staff to arrange both in school teaching and setting tasks for home learning.

If school is fully closed, pupils will be able to access hybrid learning with some lessons offered live via MS Teams, and some provided through set work or assignments on Teams.

If school remains closed for more than one day, details of each year group's daily timetable including which lessons will be live, will be posted on the 'general' page on the year group's Teams home page.

Wherever possible, the lessons will follow the usual daily timetable for your child's form. Weekly timetables can be found on MSP and the 'general' section in each year group's Team.

Q&A for Parents

Will I be contacted in the event of partial or full school closure?

Yes, by one of the methods outlined above. However, school will not contact parents individually.

Do I need to contact school?

If you decide not to travel, but school is open, please let us know. This can be via email to info@blackheathprep.co.uk. If you are planning to come in to school but may be late, please also let the office know so we can make suitable provision.

Should I travel to school or not?

Parents and staff have to decide whether it is safe for them to make the journey to school. If the school is open, we will try to ensure that there is someone at school to greet the pupils but if you arrive at school and no member of staff is present, your children must remain with you and not left unattended, until you make contact with us. Should you decide not to travel to school but school is open, refer to the information above regarding what online learning will be offered.

Will there be after-school clubs or Late Stay provision if the school is partially open?

It is unlikely that either will take place owing to the probability of reduced staffing issues and the likelihood that weather may affect staff travel to or from school. Confirmation of this will be made during the Prep Post communication to parents.

When should I collect my child if school is partially open?

Parents may collect their children at the usual end of day times unless otherwise notified.

What will be the impact on education for my child?

On days when the school has restricted opening, the pupils may not be taught by their usual teachers or in their usual classes, as we may not have our full quota of staff. However, we will ensure that we have an educationally valid day which will include English and Maths where possible.

If there is a prolonged closure of the school, we will notify parents regarding our online learning programme as detailed below.

Will there be online learning during school closure?

Yes. Preparing for online learning takes time to adapt from in person teaching, so depending on when the teaching staff have been notified of school closure on Day 1, online learning should be available from 9:35am. See more details above.

Will the school site be safe?

If we are able to, we will ensure the site is clear to allow safe access. We will only open if the site has been thoroughly risk assessed and is safe for pupils and staff. In the event of adverse weather conditions, pupils may not be able to have their playtimes outside therefore breaks may take place, supervised by staff in the form rooms. PE and Games lessons as well as Forest School may not take place outside. These lessons will either take place indoors or alternative lessons will be arranged.

What should my child wear to school if school is open during adverse weather conditions such as snow?

We advise that the children arrive in their PE kits with a change of footwear to change into when in their classrooms. They must all wear their school coats and warm outdoor clothing in case snow starts again during the day.

Will I need to provide anything different for my child if the school is partially open?

If it is necessary to ask parents to provide their children with something in addition to normal school days, such as a packed lunch, we will advise in the Prep Post correspondence.

What will happen if a decision is made to fully close after partially opening?

If the situation involving the significant incident or severe weather starts during the school day and it is evident that pupils and staff will be significantly impacted by remaining on site or travelling home, then a decision will be made to close school early.

Parents will be contacted by text and Prep Post, and pupils will need to be collected as soon as possible. We recommend that parents ensure they are contactable if the school is partially open in case school closure is necessary.

Pupils in Year 5 and 6 who have pass cards to leave the site without an adult, will only be allowed to leave when a parent has verbally given permission for this to happen. If a parent cannot be contacted the student will remain in school until they are collected by or before the end of the usual school day.

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