**St Francis' Aghaderg Primary School**

**Adverse Weather & Emergency Closure Policy**



**24 DONARD VIEW ROAD**

**LOUGHBRICKLAND**

**BANBRIDGE** 

**CO. DOWN**

**BT32 3LN**



**🕿 028 4062 8044**

**Fax: 028 4062 8044**

**E.Mail: info@stfrancis.aghaderg.ni.sch.uk**

[www.stfrancisaghaderg.com](http://www.stfrancisaghaderg.com)

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**Adverse Weather & Emergency Closure Policy**

Posted on [**March 21, 2013**](http://www.holytrinitybelfast.co.uk/2013/03/adverse-weather-policy-2/) by [**admin**](http://www.holytrinitybelfast.co.uk/author/admin/)

**Procedures used in the decision to close St Francis’ Primary School, Aghaderg in the event of adverse weather conditions or other emergency.**

 Our aim is to avoid, as far as possible, any uncertainty and confusion in the event of possible school closure. We believe that the best way to do this is to communicate as fully as possible with our parents.   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.

There are rare occasions when our school will find it necessary to close. These are usually occasions when adverse weather means that the school site or access roads to Loughbrickland are unsafe and pose health and safety risks to the school community.

Our first consideration is always the safety of the children.   In adverse weather conditions, where staff live some distance from school, the journey to school may be too hazardous for them to set out and, once here, equally hazardous for them to get home.  They may also be affected by the closure of their own children’s schools.  Health and Safety risk assessments mean that we cannot open the school if there are insufficient staff to properly supervise the children.

Where possible, staff who live locally will be in school to keep the school open.  A decision to close the school would never be taken lightly and would involve our Senior Leadership Team. In the Principal’s absence members of the Senior Leadership Team will assume responsibility for making final decisions relating to the Adverse Weather & Emergency Closure Policy.

The Education Authority in conjunction with the Met Office issue Severe Weather Warnings. In the event of a Red Weather Warning being issued, in the interests of pupil and staff safety schools will be forced to close. These are rare events. Most emergency closures will be as a result of localised severe weather or issues with the school heating or electricity supply.

 **In the event of adverse weather**:

1. The Principal will contact the Caretaker and/or other members of staff who live locally to ascertain the severity of the weather and travel conditions.
2. The Principal will contact the bus operators to ascertain:
3. If the buses will be operating
4. If the buses will be operating on the ‘Snow Route’
5. A decision will be made, as far as possible, usually before 8.00am, as to whether the school should be open or needs to be closed.
6. A message will be sent to the nominated parents informing them:
7. If the school will be closed or opened and, if relevant
8. The extent of bus service which will be available

1. In the event of closure, the school will send a message to Radio Ulster and BBC N.I. using a prearranged security code to allow them to broadcast the information to the general public.
2. We will also put any relevant information up on our school Twitter accounts or website [www.stfrancisaghaderg.com](http://www.stfrancisaghaderg.com)

Parents should also note the following:

* Parents should listen out for school closure information from local media.
* In the event of the school having to close during the day due to unforeseen worsening weather or similar unforeseen circumstances, this information will be given by text and/or telephone to parents or to the local media for parents to collect their children.
* In the event of snow, some pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents, children and visitors should be aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. Before and after school class hours, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children do not slide on the school playground.
* During significant adverse weather conditions parents should bring their children into the school building. They are asked to leave the school as soon as the staff have taken over.

**Attendance Register**

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 may 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 Authority.

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 risk their child being registered as an un-authorised absence.

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorized absence.

**We will always do everything in our power to avoid school closure.**