



## **St. Joseph's NS, Bree**

### **Exceptional Closures Policy**

#### **Rationale**

The need for the school to devise a policy on exceptional closures for occasions when the school must close due to:

- a) Dangerous weather conditions such as heavy snowfalls, storms, etc.
- b) Lack of heat or water or electricity.
- c) Damage to the school environment, such as burst water pipes, fire, etc.
- d) Critical incidents

#### **Aims and Objectives**

- To provide for the welfare of all pupils while on the school premises.
- To ensure that a safe, child-friendly school environment is available to all children.
- To conform with Health and Safety legislation procedures.
- To ensure that children are collected safely from the school premises in the event of a sudden closure.
- To give parents sufficient notice to make arrangements for childcare in the event of an exceptional closure, insofar as possible.

#### **Dangerous Weather Conditions**

In the event of dangerous weather conditions or a red weather warning, the Principal will consult with the Chairperson of the B.o.M. as soon as is feasible, and a decision will be made as to whether it is in the interests of all parties to close the school. If the Chairperson cannot be contacted in time, the Principal will consult with a member of the Board of Management living near the school. If it is decided to close the school, the Principal will text parents and inform them that the school is closed.

#### **Lack of Heat or Water or Electricity**

A lack of heating or water can give grounds for the closure of the school depending on the circumstances. In cold weather, the school may have to close if the heating is not working. Also, a problem with the water supply can mean that children may not be able to use the toilet, or wash their hands. The loss of electricity would not normally mean closing the school unless it affected the heating or water supply. In the event of a lack of heating or water supply, the Principal will consult with the Chairperson of the B.o.M. as soon as is feasible, and a decision will be made as to whether it is in the interests of all parties to close the school. If the Chairperson cannot be contacted, the principal will make the decision.

#### **Sudden Closures**

During the course of a school day, it may become necessary to close the school due to a lack of heating or water supply. Parents should be contacted as soon as possible if there is a possibility that the school may have to close later in the day. This is to ensure that parents get sufficient time to arrange for collection and supervision. Children will not be sent home on the buses as the school cannot guarantee that children will be collected at the bus stop.

#### **Procedure for Closing the School during the School Day**

**Principal:** Mr. Mark Kelly  
**Deputy Principal:** Mrs. Anne O'Dowd



**Chairperson:** Fr. Michael Byrne

1. Gather information about the conditions within the school.
2. Gather information about the problem regarding when it might be rectified.
3. Notify parents as soon as possible that there might be a possibility that the school may have to close. This is to allow parents sufficient time to put childcare arrangements in place.
4. If closing the school is deemed necessary, text the parents and notify them the time at which the children may be collected. The school will endeavour to provide sufficient time for parents to arrange collection.
5. The staff will supervise children until they are collected.
6. Buses will not be used to bring children home as the school cannot guarantee that the children will be collected safely from the bus stop.

### **Damage to the School Environment**

In the event of damage to the school environment, the Principal will consult with the Chairperson of the B.o.M. as soon as is feasible, and a decision will be made as to whether it is in the interests of all parties to close the school. If the Chairperson cannot be contacted in time, the Principal will consult with a member of the Board of Management living near the school.

If it is decided to close the school, the Principal will use the Textparent service to contact parents and inform them that the school is closed.

### **Critical Incident / Death**

In some instances the school might be advised to remain closed for pupils in the event of a critical incident. Parents will be informed of such closures by text. In these particular instances, the school may remain open to staff and B.o.M or Parents Association if issues such as church services, guards of honour, readings or counselling are required.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the Board of Management are:

- To maintain a safe school environment for all staff, children and parents.
- To make timely decisions regarding emergency closures.
- To communicate decisions to members of the school community.

**Ratified by the Board of Management:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Chairperson, Board of Management)**