

## **Emergency Closures Policy**

### **Introduction:**

The school policy on emergency closures was drafted as a whole school exercise, involving parents, pupils, staff and Board of Management. It was circulated to the entire school community in 2018 via the school website.

### **Rationale:**

The need for the school to produce a policy on emergency closures in recent years is primarily due to:

- Upgrading of local amenities from time to time which may lead to the power being turned off.
- Inclement weather, such as heavy snowfalls, high winds etc.
- Building programmes and alterations to the design of the school, which have necessitated unscheduled closures on Health and Safety grounds in recent years.

### **Relationship to School Ethos:**

Ballindaggin NS strives to provide a child friendly, secure environment catering for all the needs of all students as far as is practicable and where respect is fostered in a culture which values diversity and difference.

### **Aims and Objectives:**

- To provide for the welfare of all pupils while on the school premises.
- To ensure a safe, child friendly school environment is available to all children.
- To comply with Health and Safety legislation.

## **Procedures**

### **Heavy Snowfall:**

In the event of a heavy snowfall, the Principal shall consult with the Chairperson of the BoM and the nominated member of the BoM responsible for checking accessibility to the school 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 it is decided to close the school a text will be sent to all parents via Aladdin by the Principal, Deputy Principal or school secretary. The school website and Twitter account will also be updated to reflect any school closure. Regular announcements will be maintained via Twitter, school website and Aladdin to keep parents informed.

All bus operators servicing the school will be contacted by the Principal or another designated person, confirming that the school will not be opening. If the snowfall is prolonged over a number of days and the school is closed indefinitely, parents and bus operators will be informed of re-opening dates through Twitter, the school website and Aladdin.

It is not the policy of the school to confirm such closures through the local radio station.

**Disconnection of Services:**

Where water or electricity services to the school are to be disconnected, a week's notification is normally given to the school authorities. This enables the school to furnish the parent body with the relevant advance warning of such closures via text. It is not the policy of the school to confirm such closures through the local radio station.

**High Winds/Thunderstorms:**

The procedures in place for heavy snowfall are generally replicated in the event of storms/lightning i.e. parents and bus operators are contacted via Aladdin, Twitter and the school website and informed that the school will remain closed. If the school has already opened and is in operation when high winds etc. occur and remaining on the premises is a risk to all - teachers will remain on the premises until all the children have been collected by either parents/guardians or bus operators.

**Critical Incident/Death:**

In some instances the school might remain closed for pupils in the event of a critical incident or death of a staff member, BoM member or pupil. Parents are informed of such closures either by circular or text. In this particular instance, the school may remain open to staff and BoM or Parents Association if issues such as church services, Guards of honour, readings or counselling is required (See Critical Incident Policy).

**Please note:**

All half days and in-Service closures are notified to parents at least one week in advance.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

Emergency closures in the school place particular responsibilities on various personnel within the school chain of command.

**Success Criteria:**

- Positive school community feedback
- Compliance with Health and Safety legislation
- Maintaining a safe school environment for all staff, children and parents

**Ratification and Communication:**

This policy has been in operation in the school since January 2018 having been communicated by the then BoM by means of the school website following ratification at the school BoM meeting on 24.1.18

**Implementation and Review:**

This policy will be reviewed in the light of unplanned events that lead to unscheduled school closures, but not later than 2023.

This policy was ratified on \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson BoM: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_