



## Bad Weather Policy

### Policy for bad weather

Bad weather (particularly snow) is a rare event for Prenton High School students. However when it comes it is disruptive and can cause anxiety and stress. Understandably, many parents/carers ring the school if snow starts falling heavily. **We ask parents/carers to be patient in this event and use the school website where we will endeavour to have the latest updated information.**

In extreme circumstances, when very bad weather is predicted or has broken out, the school may allow students to call their parents/carers via a mobile phone if they have one. Such calls must always have prior approval of a teacher and must be made in a supervised environment. [Please note that mobile phone use is banned on school premises, except when a student has requested, and been given permission by a teacher, to call to a parent/carer or relative for a particular reason].

Decisions about closing the school or sending students home early are always difficult to make. We need to gather reliable information before making a judgement. We check weather reports, get advice from the bus, rail and other relevant transport companies and try to assess what is happening elsewhere in the area. Some transport may not be available. Operators have to decide whether running vehicles on particular routes in snow and ice is too high a risk. Drivers are rarely available at times other than scheduled school runs. That is why schools often take their lead from the bus companies when deciding what to do.

### Here is our advice to you on what to do:

- 1. If there is severe weather overnight**
- 2. If the weather deteriorates during the day**

#### 1. If there is severe weather overnight

The decision to close school will be made by the Headteacher in consultation with site staff and the Chair of Governors.

The designated Snow Monitor will inform the Headteacher of the local conditions.

Information relating to the closure will be relayed to:

- Radio Merseyside
- Radio City
- Heart FM
- the local authority website – [www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/education-and-learning/school-and-colleges/school-closures](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/education-and-learning/school-and-colleges/school-closures)
- the school website [www.prentonhighschool.co.uk](http://www.prentonhighschool.co.uk).

The Director of Finance will liaise with our IT Manager who will up-date the website as required.

Staff will be contacted using the Emergency Contact chain of responsibility.

Review date: Summer 2018

## 2. If the weather deteriorates during the day

If snow occurs during the day there are three possible decisions to be made by the Headteacher:

- Keep school open
- Send students and staff home early
- Close school the next day (staff to attend if possible)

The decision will be based on the risks involved to students in travelling home and the probability of large numbers of staff (in particular) and students not being able to reach school safely the next day.

**Where possible**, students will be given a letter containing the necessary information. Students, radio stations and the school website will be updated as necessary.

The decision to close the school will be taken in consultation with the Chair of Governors (if available), transport companies and the Senior Leadership Team. The students will be informed that school will close. Information will be relayed to radio stations. We will supervise the use of mobile phones by students to inform family of the intended closure. **STUDENTS MUST NOT DO THIS UNLESS SUPERVISED.** There will be an orderly release of students and all attempts will be made to make contact with parents/carers of students who did not have access to a phone or who have not made contact anyhow. Students must tell their parents/carers that we will do everything to ensure a safe release as they leave school. Our default strategy for this will be to move students to their Form rooms and then release them according to bus times, travel arrangements and home location.

Parents/carers who turn up to collect their children may have to wait. Please be extra vigilant and respectful of our neighbours if collecting students by car.

**Students who have not made contact with a family member should not leave the school.**

We will keep students safe until permission is granted to release them.

### Advice to staff

All staff should not assume they can leave school with the students should we decide to close. In some cases you may be directed to stay in school. This decision can only be made by the Headteacher. Individuals should not seek permission from the Headteacher during the process of evacuating students from school. The Headteacher is able to use her discretion in releasing staff and may allow staff who travel long distances to school to leave early. In any event a fair and transparent system will operate.

- Staff unable to travel to school must report this by a phone call. You may be required to report to school even when students have been sent home.
- Staff may well be asked to undertake appropriate alternative duties to teaching in the event that the students are sent home. These duties will be in line with current role duties.
- Staff may well be asked to report to their nearest school/other venue if they are unable to make it to school.
- Leave of absence is at the Headteacher's discretion if requested by staff.

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