



Markyate Village School and Nursery

Severe Weather Plan 2022

PROCEDURES TO DEAL WITH THE CONSEQUENTIAL ISSUES ARISING FROM SEVERE WEATHER OR A PUBLIC EMERGENCY

This guidance sets out the actions Markyate Village School needs to take in the event of severe weather or if a public emergency is declared by the local authority.

1. Closure Decisions

1.1 The decision to close a school in severe weather, or when responding to a public emergency, should be taken by the Headteacher based on the following:

- Local conditions
- This guidance
- An assessment of risk
- Information from the local authority

1.2 Schools with reduced teaching staff should consider staying open and providing group activities to limit the impact on working parents.

1.3 If the Council advises a school or group of schools of a public emergency that may require their school(s) to close the HCC Warn and Inform procedure will be followed. See section **Warn and Inform**.

1.4 Where possible, advanced warning will be given. Where this has been issued, we should consider how this might impact on our establishment, for example:

- Staffing issues
- Fuel supplies
- Catering supplies
- Transport issues e.g. Passenger Transport Unit, taxis etc.

1.5 Where it is likely that there will be prolonged severe weather or closures related to a public emergency, a Local Authority team will be set up to co-ordinate and support services. Regular emails will be sent to the Headteacher giving the county picture and any new information as it becomes available.

1.6 Should the school require any additional assistance, for example if the premises has sustained serious damage, follow the guidance in the Schools Emergency Response Plan located here on the Schools grid:

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/healthandsafety/critical-incident.shtml>

Should the school require any additional assistance, for example if the premises have sustained serious damage, please refer to the Premises Information on the Schools grid located here:

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/premises/>

Or the Critical Incident Page (where you will find this document stored), located here:

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/healthandsafety/critical-incident.shtml>

and use the contact numbers below: Monday-Friday 8.30 – 17.30 01438 737261

Saturday 9.00 – 16.00 01438 737261

2. HCC Critical Incident Telephone Helpline

2.1 Information and updates about any interruptions to normal business of HCC services can be obtained by telephoning the HCC staff helpline:

The number 01992 556616 has thirty lines and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is only updated when an incident affecting business continuity has occurred.

2.2 The helpline will also be used to provide information during any other emergencies which may require us to close any HCC buildings.

3. Staffing

3.1 Unless specifically told otherwise, staff will be expected to use their best endeavours to attend work without putting themselves or others at risk. When the police recommend that motorists undertake only essential journeys this is considered to include travel to work and school.

3.2 The Headteacher should ensure there is an up-to-date list of home contact/mobile phone details of all staff and parents. This is on Arbor.

3.3 Where it is deemed too unsafe or difficult for staff to attend their workplace, other options should be considered.

4. Preparation for Severe Weather

4.1 In severe weather make sure that the heating is left on during 'out of hours' periods for frost protection purposes. Where appropriate, ensure there is adequate fuel for prolonged closures.

4.2 Brief staff in advance to ensure they know what is expected of them.

4.3 Brief parents, children e.t.c. in advance to ensure they understand how they can get up-to-date information, e.g. www.hertfordshire.gov.uk, local radio, school website, school app, email and/or text.

4.4 Ensure regular suppliers/contractors are informed of procedures and confirm arrangements are in place for essential services/deliveries.

4.5 Where schools are open, risk assessments must be undertaken to ensure the health and safety of staff, pupils and all site users. Inspections of paths and walkways should be carried out regularly and documented. This should include local arrangements for clearing and salting when ice or snow appears, as well as any failures to the surfaces.

As the school is insured with the Government RPA scheme, the RPA's insurance section will deal with any liability issues that arise. Any claim that is made to the school should be passed to the insurance section immediately.

The team will then process the claim and deal direct with the claimant, or their appointed representatives.

4.6 Where gales or high wind warnings have been issued, the site should be checked for dead or damaged branches/trees and other potential hazards to people or property.

4.7 Where it is not possible for some staff and/or children to return home, the school should ensure there are plans in place to provide warmth and hot refreshments.

4.8 In extreme conditions HCC may request that schools or other establishments be used as rest centres for members of the public.

4.9 All schools should have the retained services of a property consultant to provide emergency cover and support. HCC does not provide emergency advice or support in relation of property. Further advice is available on the schools grid in the following location: <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/premises>

5. Reopening of School Following Closure

5.1 When the severe weather has passed, establishments should check their premises before announcing that it will reopen. The manager or key holder should inspect the premises for signs of damage, e.g. heating failure, flooding, burst pipes or damaged trees.

5.2 School sites that have experienced damage serious enough to warrant declaring a Critical Incident should follow the guidance in the School Emergency Response Plan and use the numbers below:

Monday – Friday 8.30 – 17.30 01438 737261 Saturday 9.00 – 16.00 01438 737261

5.3 The Headteacher should use Arbor to advise staff.

6. Responding to Severe Weather

6.1 To call the local radio stations you will need to give them a password to authenticate so that they know you are genuine – password is Rainbow.

6.2 Please remember that in very extreme cases the radio stations may be overloaded. We will use the following methods of communication:

- Publish information on our own website - Leave a message on the answer phone - Have contact numbers for staff and parents on Arbor - Leave a message on the main entrance or gate and, ensure someone is there to meet any children/parents who may turn up. - Inform parents/staff in the school newsletter of the above methods (include this in the procedural information given out to parents in their 'starting school' packs).

6.3 If at all possible, notify parents of your school's closure between midday and mid-afternoon of the day before. If you cannot make a decision until the morning, please send your message as early as possible to reach parents and children before they set off for school.