

Tatham Fells CE (VC) Primary School
Temporary, Unavoidable School Closure Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 There may be occasions when it is necessary for Tatham Fells CE (VC) Primary School to close temporarily in the interests of health and safety to pupils and staff. In most cases this will be as a result of problems relating to the school building or heating, or because of severe weather conditions.
- 1.2 Such a temporary, unavoidable closure does not currently count against the minimum requirement for a school to be open for a minimum number of sessions each year (190 days/380 sessions). However, it is important to keep the necessity to close to a minimum in order to reduce the number of pupil days lost to education.

2. Responsibility for School Closure

- 2.1 Schedule 13 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 refers to the occupation and use of a community or community special school as being under the control of the governing body, subject to any directions given by the local education authority. The power to close schools for emergency reasons rests with the governing body who delegate this function to the Head Teacher.

3. Reasons for Closure/Procedures

- 3.1 Tatham Fells CE (VC) Primary School will operate normally whenever possible and only resort to closure or early closure in exceptional circumstances when conditions are such that the health and safety of pupils and staff are at risk.
- 3.2 The Head Teacher and Governors determine in advance to whom the decision whether or not to close the school to pupils is to be delegated (eg Head Teacher or Head Teacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors).

3.3 A decision to close the school in the case of severe weather is made following:

- Consideration of reports/warnings from the appropriate authorities (eg travel warnings from local police).
- Condition of the roads including amount of snow and ice accumulation.
- Weather predictions. We prefer to make our decision on factors other than weather predictions, which are not always accurate, but sometimes this is unavoidable.
- Guidance from the Local Education Authority (LEA)

3.4 In the case of a building matter or heating problem which has health and safety implications, consideration will be given to whether a part closure rather than a full closure could be achieved in order to minimise disruption to education. Further contingency measures may be required if the closure is to be lengthy (eg offsite education).

3.5 In considering closure for health and safety reasons, the Head Teacher will, where possible, seek guidance from LEA. The role of the LEA is to offer clear guidance. However, the final decision rests with the Head Teacher and / or the Governing Body. Once a decision is made to close, the Head Teacher will advise the LEA. The Head Teacher will remain in contact with the LEA until such time as the school is fully reopened.

3.6 If the Head Teacher and/or the Chair of Governors feel it is necessary, after due consideration, not to open the school, or to close the school early, every effort will be made to inform parents/carers and other agencies of the decision at the earliest opportunity.

3.7 In the event of an early closure, parents and carers will be notified by telephone.

3.8 In the event of adverse weather conditions, parents and carers are asked to check for school closure by: ringing school to hear a recorded message, checking for notification on the school website or LCC website or listen for closure on the local radio station (Bay Radio 96.9FM).

3.9 If school continues to be closed after the first day then this information will be carried on local radio and a notification will be posted on the school/authority website.

4. Staff Attendance

4.1 Unless told otherwise by the Head Teacher, staff are expected to attend work in the normal way during severe weather conditions. Staff who arrive late as a result of adverse weather conditions will not lose pay or be required to make up lost time.

4.2 If the School closure is due to exceptional circumstances when conditions are such that the health and safety of staff are at risk, then staff will be asked by the Head Teacher to work from home. Staff must remain contactable during this time and may be asked to attend school if necessary.

5. Policy Review

5.1 This policy was drawn up after consulting relevant information and documentation from the DFE and Guidance from the Local Education Authority. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Head Teacher and Governing Body. The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed in the Autumn Term of each academic year. Any suggested amendments will be presented to the Governors for discussion and approval at the next meeting of the same term.

Tatham Fells CE (VC) Primary School

Signed (Headteacher):

Signed (On behalf of the Governing Body):

Date: January 2014

Review date: January 2017