

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY SCHOOLS IN THE EVENT OF SEVERE WEATHER

SEVERE WEATHER WARNINGS

The Bolton Council website www.bolton.gov.uk will be updated as often as appropriate with severe weather warnings. The website also includes guidance for parents and others who may be concerned about school closures. The following is specific guidance for schools.

GRITTING

Whilst main roads are gritted, the routes to individual schools are not necessarily covered. To find out if your school is on a gritted route, please refer to www.bolton.gov.uk/website/pages/Roadsgritting.aspx or ring extension (01204) **336600**

Please ensure that grit for your own premises is ordered **before** the danger of freezing is upon us, that pedestrian and vehicular routes on the school property are gritted as necessary and that play areas are safe. Grit can be ordered from the Council's Environmental Services Department via **(01204) 336628**. It is best practice to keep a record of when and where you grit, in case of insurance claims following accidents on your site.

SAFETY AROUND SCHOOL

Safety of pupils and staff at school is paramount. If snow is making porches or corridors abnormally wet, please take precautions against slipping indoors, such as mats and mopping regularly. Please ensure that the storage of boots, umbrellas, etc, does not block corridors or fire exits, or pose a trip hazard.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

A decision to close a school must be taken by the headteacher in consideration of the individual circumstances at their own premises. This would include not only the severity of the local weather, but roads and pathways which may make access particularly difficult, the ability of staff to get to school, and the availability of bus services.

Special Schools: There is a recognised procedure for the closure of special schools, relating to transport of pupils to these schools. Special schools will be aware of this procedure.

Primary Schools: As most primary school pupils do not travel home alone, and/or are not expected to arrive home to an empty house, it is not normally acceptable to close a primary school before the end of the school day. If, in exceptional circumstances, this should prove necessary, all children must be handed over to appropriate adults (e.g. their own parents or parents of their friends) unless parents expressly agree that they may travel home alone. This would involve trying to contact every child's home, a task best avoided if possible.

Secondary Schools: In extreme weather conditions, it may be necessary to close the school early and send pupils home, particularly if it is felt that worsening conditions may make the journey home dangerous or if it is anticipated that buses may be cancelled. All pupils should be offered the opportunity to telephone home and the school should ensure that all pupils can get home and do have a key, if no-one will be home. Where there is any uncertainty about this, alternative arrangements should be made, for example that pupils go to a friend's home until their own parents come home.

ADVISING OF SCHOOL CLOSURES

Please advise the **Asset Management Team** in Children's Services on **(01204) 332068** of your decision to close as soon as it is made.

This information will be posted on the Department's website at www.bolton.gov.uk

Parents can also ring the Council's Contact Centre on **(01204) 333333** to find out which schools are closed.

Please also advise at least one of the local radio stations, which are:

Bolton FM	Tel: 01204 375408	96.5 FM
Tower FM	Tel: 0845 208 1074	107.4 FM
BBC Radio Manchester	Tel: 0161 200 2000	95.1 FM

These will normally provide half hourly bulletins. When contacting the radio stations schools will need to identify themselves with their school name and DfE number.

Schools are also requested to notify their kitchen manager and school lead cleaner as soon as possible about a decision to close. In the event of Environmental Services staff being unavailable for work, schools can contact the following for advice and support:

School Meals	01204 336954
School Cleaning	01204 336942

You may wish to consider writing to all parents advising them of the procedure you will use to advise them of a school closure should this become necessary, i.e. text messaging, which of the above radio stations you will advise (possibly all three), and where information can be found, i.e. www.bolton.gov.uk

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