School Closure Policy Checklist

There may be times, for a number of reasons, when schools are required to close for short or extended periods of time. Although we hope that this isn't the case, and it's only in extreme circumstances that this happens, it's best practice to have a policy that covers and prepares stakeholders for this eventuality.

Use this checklist as a reference when creating your school's closure policy:

Making decisions ☑

First you must decide whether or not it's the right decision to close your school. In order to help you make an informed decision you must take into account a number of considerations and options. Outline these considerations in your school's policy so parents and staff know the steps you have taken to come to a decision. Consider including:

- Has the government advised you to close the school?
- Are your staff and students' safety and/or wellbeing at risk?
- Have you undertaken a risk assessment to help weigh up the risks of keeping students at the school versus sending them home?
- Has the decision come from a person of authority in the school? (The decision to close the school schould come from the Headteacher, unless otherwise advised by the Government, and the Head should seek approval from the Chair of Governors where feasible.)

Communication ☐

Once the decision has been made to close the school you should communicate the decision to these key audiences:

- Your local council
- Local radio stations
- Parents

Notifying parents ☐

As soon as you have made the decision to close the school you need to inform parents, giving them as much notice as possible. Be sure that in your school comms policy you inform parents of your preferred communication methods.

Potential methods of communication include:

- Text messaging apps
- Announcements via local radio stations
- Updating the school website
- Updating school social media sites
- Online communication software for school announcements, bulletins etc

When notifying parents be sure to include as much information as possible, such as:

- Why the decision has been made to close the school
- If applicable, when the school will be reopened
- Where to go for updates on the closure
- The best method of communication to get in contact with the school
- A list of sources where they can go for additional information (eg. The Met Office website in the case of adverse weather conditions)
- If parents will need to make childcare/work arrangements
- The expectation for children to continue learning during the closure

Minimising disruption to learning ☐

You must also consider how you are going to ensure as little disruption to learning occurs as possible. This includes communicating how school work will be communicated in the case of a school closure:

- Do subject departments have individual Twitter accounts or Facebook pages and can work be communicated via these channels?
- Do you have an online learning platform where teachers can issue classwork online?
- Consider how students will submit work digitally and how teachers can provide them with feedback, so they don't need to wait for the school to reopen to receive grades etc.
- Can students email or message teachers if they have questions?

Closing during the school day ☐

In some cases of emergency school closures, schools may be forced to shut during the middle of the school day. In your policy be sure to outline what steps the school will take to accommodate for these instances. Key considerations, in addition to everything outlined above, include:

- How will this information be communicated - the school website, social media, text message, email, push notification?

- Will you require confirmation from parents to say whether or not they are able to collect their child at an earlier time?
- What is the process for any students whose parents are unable to collect them early?
- Is there a possibility, if considered safe, for students to stay supervised at the school with a member of staff until the normal end of the school day?
- Will buses/coaches be collecting students early from school?