

Emergency Closures

Introduction

The school procedure on emergency closures was drafted by the staff and Board of Management in consultation with the Parent's Association.. It will be posted on the school website in due course. The Board of Management of the school will make every effort to keep the school open and in operation but instances may arise where in the interest of the safety of pupils and staff it is necessary to close the school temporarily.

Rationale

The need for the school to devise a procedure on emergency closures in recent years is primarily due to

- a) Inclement weather, such as heavy snowfalls, high winds etc.
- b) Building programmes and alterations to the design of the school which may necessitate unscheduled closures on Health and Safety grounds.
- c) Temporary disconnection of services such as water and electricity.

Relationship to School Ethos

Clarecastle National School strives to provide a child friendly, secure environment catering for all the needs of all students and staff as far as is practicable and where respect is fostered in a culture which values diversity and difference.

Aims and Objectives

- To provide for the welfare of all pupils and staff while on the school premises.
- To ensure a safe, child friendly school environment is available to all children.
- To conform with Health and Safety legislation.

Procedures

Heavy Snowfall

In the event of a heavy snowfall, the Principal shall consult with the Chairperson of the B.O.M. as soon as is feasible, and a decision is made as to whether it is in the interests of all parties to close the school.

If it is decided to close the school, the school authorities will contact the local radio station, Clare FM and request that regular announcements be carried on the airwaves that the school will not be opening. Parents will be informed via text.

Disconnection of Services

Where water or electricity services to the school are to be disconnected, a week's notification is normally given to the school authorities. This enables the school to furnish the parent body with the relevant advance warning of such closures via circular or text. It is not the procedure of the school to confirm such closures through the local Radio station.

High Winds / Thunderstorms

The procedures in place for heavy snowfall are generally replicated in the event of storms / lightning. If the school has already opened and is in operation when high winds etc. occur and remaining on the premises is a risk to all, teachers will remain on the premises until all children have been collected by either parents / guardians.

Critical Incident / Death

In some instances the school might remain closed for pupils in the event of a critical incident or death of a staff member, B.O.M member or pupil. Parents are informed of such closures either by circular or text whichever is appropriate. In this particular instance, the school may remain open to staff and B.O.M or Parents Association if issues such as church services, Guards of honour, readings or counselling is required.

Roles and Responsibilities

Emergency closures in the school place particular responsibilities on various personnel within the school. Decisions in relation to school closures will be made by the Board of Management when necessary or on occasion by the Minister for Education and Science. All school staff will have a role in ensuring their own safety and the safety of all members of the school community on the school premises at these times.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Mr. M Moloney
Principal