

9th January 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I thought that this was a good time to send out my annual reminder about procedures if the school either has to close or open late for snow. It is, of course, my profound hope that no such procedures are needed.

Any decision to close is taken as a last resort and is normally related to my not having enough staff able to get into school in order to be able to open. Safety is of paramount importance and I need to make a decision based on travelling conditions, the safety of staff and students both on site and travelling to and from the school, and of course based on any advice regarding travel by the police. On occasions where the school might have to close, myself and senior staff are in touch with the onsite caretaker from around 5.30am in order to assess the condition of the site.

I recognise that any closure can cause child care issues. As such, I commit to have made any decision regarding closure and to have it up on our website, out via In-Touch and notified via the Herts closure system by 7.00am on any day where closure is a possibility. If there is nothing out via any of these methods by 7.00am on a snowy day, then we are open as usual.

It is not necessarily the case that the school will close in full. If we have enough staff able to get in to allow for a skeleton staffing, we will look to open to designated year groups – usually exam year groups. Our site is a relatively large one and is particularly vulnerable to sheet ice forming. As we have done previously, we might therefore open late on some occasions, eg at 10.30am, to give us time to clear as much snow and ice as we can.

In the event that we do need to close the school, open late and/or partially, we use the Hertfordshire School Closure Notification system where I log into a registration system run by Everbridge. Messages received by this system are then posted on a public facing noticeboard linked from Hertsdirect.org. An email is also automatically generated and sent to our two nominated radio stations – **3 Counties** and **Heart 101.7**

Parents are now also able to receive messages directly from the Schools Closure Notification System by SMS and email. To sign up parents will need to use the following link:
member.everbridge.net/index/892807736725489 This link will direct you to the “Sign Up” page where you should click on the “sign up” button located at the top right hand side of the page on the grey strip and from there follow the instructions. It should take no more than 5 minutes to register and you can edit your information at any time should you change your mobile number or email address.

Each contact within the system can have 2 devices added for each communication type if you wish to – this means that in addition to adding your own mobile number and email address, you could include the mobile number and email address of a partner or a grandparent in the registration process. They too would then receive any messages in relation to the school’s closure. Alternatively, interested parties could register themselves separately.

If you have children at more than one school you can register for those schools too in a single registration

process by selecting all schools you have children at. Once signed up you will receive messages relating to the status of your child's school.

In addition to the above, a message will be left on the school answer phone and information posted on the school website, as well as texted to parents via our In-Touch system. In terms of capacity to deal with the number of visits or calls, the hertsdirect website is specifically set up to deal with high volumes of 'visitors'.

In summary, if we do have snow that might facilitate the closure of the school you will receive information by 7.00am via:

- HCC (Everbridge) if you sign up to the Schools Closure Notification System
- Our website
- Message on our school answering machine – please remember that this will show as engaged when receiving a large volume of calls
- Text to your mobile phone via In Touch – please ensure that we have your most up to date mobile number
- A message to our two nominated radio stations listed above

When snow is on the ground I am very happy for students to wear boots to school as part of ensuring that they are warm and dry.

I very much hope that snow will not prove disruptive this year. However, just in case, please can you keep a copy of this letter to hand. A copy will also be placed on the school website.

Yours sincerely



Alison J Garner
Principal