



Edenmore National School

Exceptional/Emergency School Closures Policy

Introduction:

This school policy on exceptional and emergency closures was by the Board of Management of Edenmore National School. It has been formulated and is compliant with circulars 11/95 and 34/2011 in mind as well as Rule 60 of National Rules for Schools. Rule 60 states that “Should some exceptional circumstances arise (for example, failure of the heating system or damage caused by vandalism), the Board of Management may close the school even if the school cannot be kept open for 183 days”

Rationale:

The need for the school to produce a policy on exceptional and emergency closures is primarily due to:

- Inclement weather, such as heavy snowfalls, high winds, weather warnings etc.
- Leaks in the local water scheme which causes a Health & Safety Issue regarding access to toilets
- Break down in the heating system or electricity supply
- Serious damage to the school building
- Building programmes and alterations to the design of the school which may necessitate unscheduled closures on Health and Safety grounds
- Critical Incident
- Facilitate staff continued professional development and Department of Education in-service training

Relationship to School Ethos:

Edenmore National School strives to provide a child-friendly, secure, and safe learning environment catering to the needs of all students, whilst also striving to ensure that staff and visitors can access a safe and welcoming working environment. This aim is founded on respect for the individual, child or adult and is fostered in a culture which values diversity and difference.

Aims and Objectives of the policy:

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



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- To adhere to circulars issued by the Department of Education

1.Unplanned Closures:

Heavy Snowfall / Dangerous Roads

In the event of a heavy snowfall or treacherous roads, the Principal shall consult with the Chairperson of the Board of Management 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 all school staff via and parents/guardians via the Aladdin App to inform them that the school will not be opening. If the snowfall is prolonged over a number of days and the school is closed indefinitely, parents will be informed of reopening dates via the Aladdin App. If the school has already opened and is in operation when snowfall occurs, and subsequently remaining on the premises or driving on surrounding roads is deemed a risk to all, parents will be notified to collect their children from the school.

High Winds/Thunderstorms

The procedures in place for heavy snowfall are generally replicated in the event of storms/lightning i.e. parents are contacted via the Aladdin App and informed that the school will remain closed. If the school has already opened and is in operation when high winds and storms occur, and subsequently remaining on the premises is a risk to all, parents will be notified via the Aladdin App to collect their children from the school.

The Unexpected Loss of Services

Where notification is not given to the school regarding the loss of electricity or water services, the Principal will endeavour to determine the extent of the interruption to the service. Following consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management regarding the health and safety implications of the loss in service, a decision may be taken to notify the parents/guardians of the need to close the school. Parents will be notified via the Aladdin App to collect their children from the school. Teachers will remain on the premises until the pupils in their class have been collected by their parents/guardians.



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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, BOM Member or pupil. Parents are informed of such closures, by whichever means is deemed appropriate by the Principal/Deputy Principal and/or Chairperson. In this particular instance, the school may remain open to staff, Board of Management and Parent Teacher Association, if issues such as funeral services, liaison with media or counselling need to be addressed (See Critical Incident Policy).

2. Planned Closures:

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 the Aladdin App.

Building Programmes

The Principal will consult with the Caretaker ahead of Board of Management meetings to ensure compliance with any statutory obligations in this regard. Parents/guardians will be briefed on any relevant matters and the health and safety of pupils and staff will be paramount in any decisions made regarding closure in such circumstances.

Department of Education Guidelines

In cases where the Department of Education issue a directive for all schools to close, due to adverse weather conditions, Edenmore NS will comply with these announcements and parents will be informed via the Aladdin App.

The guidance provides that subject to consensus at a local level, any changes to normal practice that can be made to address the shortfalls should be put in place. Examples of how this might be achieved include:

- prioritising tuition over other non-tuition activities
- consideration of whether learning in the classroom should be prioritised over school tours, etc



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Staff Meetings/In-service Closures

All half days and in-service closures are notified to parents at least one week in advance. Where possible, further notice is given. Reminder notices are issued closer to the date. All bus/taxi operators servicing the school are kept informed regarding any such closures by the school secretary.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Emergency closures in the school place particular responsibilities on various personnel within the school.

1) Chairperson of Board of Management and Principal

The ultimate decision to close the school is to be made by the Chairperson and Principal of the school in accordance with circulars 11/95 and 34/2011. Decisions will be made in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy and the safety of pupils, parents and staff will be paramount to all decisions.

2) Principal and Secretary

The Principal and secretary are responsible for:

- Organising annual review of parent contact details.
- The Principal/Secretary are responsible for notifying all parents, bus/taxi companies and Edenbeagof the closure.
- The Principal is responsible for notifying staff of unplanned closures
- In the event of Orange weather warnings, a notification will be sent to parents on the morning of, to confirm if the school will remain closed. In the event of the school remaining open, parents will be asked to be vigilant during the day in checking the Aladdin App incase the school must close early. If the school must close during yellow warnings due to road conditions or health and safety concerns within the school, Parents will be contacted through the Aladdin App.
- During the Winter months, the Principal will put a weather safety notice in the Newsletter reminding parents to be cognizant of weather warnings due to health and safety.



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3) Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Keeping school informed on up-to-date contact details during the school year
- Checking the Aladdin App when notifications are sent
- Supporting this plan by making arrangements for the collection of their children

4) Board of Management

The Board of Management have overall responsibility to ensure that the school is in full compliance with the Health and Safety Policy and any breaches may merit school closure, as deemed by the Board of Management.

5) Staff are responsible for :

- Regularly checking Aladdin and Whatsapp messages
- Compliance with Health and Safety legislation and procedures in school
- Maintaining a safe school environment for all staff, children and parents

After-school activities

In the event of unexpected closures, after-school events hosted by the school will be cancelled and a notification will be sent to parents via Aladdin. For children who avail of the afterschool service with Edenbeag, the school will contact Edenbeag to inform them of our school closure, but it is the responsibility of parents to make contact with Edenbeag to discuss further arrangements. The school will not be involved in providing additional supervision for these children in the event of emergency closures and therefore, it will be the responsible of parents to make supervision/collections arrangements following direction from Edenbeag.

Success Criteria

- ✓ Conformance with Health and Safety legislation
- ✓ Maintaining a safe school environment for all staff, children and parents
- ✓ Positive school community feedback



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Ratification and Review:

This Emergency School Closures Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 19/2/2024.

Signed: Stephan McQuillan
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Caitiona Uí Chléirigh
Principal

Date: 19-2-24

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