



# Midlothian Council Policy Guidelines: Emergency Planning Procedures for ELC Settings, Schools and Children's Services establishments

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In all procedures relating to severe weather conditions, the paramount concern is the safety of students, staff and service users. That precept is embodied in this document and should be borne in mind throughout any emergency by all decision-makers. To assist Head Teachers in particular, this document sets out a number of key principles. Ultimately, however, an exceptional local situation may necessitate some action which is in the interest of pupil, student or staff safety, but which has not been anticipated here. In such a case, at least until communication is made with the People and Partnerships Directorate, the decision to act rests with the Centre Manager, Head Teacher or team leader, but a full school closure should not be decided by them alone.

This document complements the Education Emergency Plan (*Policy Guidelines 5.6*), Midlothian Council's Emergency Procedures, Severe Weather Plan and Guidance on Adverse Weather Conditions. ([www.midlothian.gov.uk](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk) – use the search facility). These procedures can be accessed through the Council Website.

## 2.0 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Midlothian Council receives weather warnings through the Met Office National Severe Weather Warning Service. This information is disseminated within the Council, including the Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate, which will then inform ELC settings, schools and centres as appropriate. Other sources of information include local radio and the police.

## 3.0 KEY PRINCIPLES

Clearly, the local situation will vary with the severity of the weather and the location of the ELC setting, school or centre. Nevertheless, it has been possible to establish a number of common principles, and these are set out below. One general principle is that, in a worsening situation, action is better taken sooner rather than later. However, the only action at an early stage will be to inform the Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate that there is likely to be a problem with regard to deteriorating weather conditions or loss of services i.e. power, heating, water.

### 3.1 Closure of Establishments: Communications Protocol

Severe weather, particularly if it takes the form of heavy snowfalls, can mean that pupils need to be dismissed early to ensure their safe travel home. It should be noted that close contact should be maintained with school transport operators as outlined in Section 3.6. Loss of essential services - power, heating, water - may also necessitate the early dismissal of pupils or cancellation of activities. Where the need for this is considered likely, the Centre Manager, Head Teacher or team leader should follow the procedure set out below and inform People and Partnerships by means of a **School/Centre Closure Request Form** (Appendix 2). This can be done by email, though the preferred course of action would be to inform the line manager by telephone as early as possible. The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships, or one of the Chief Officers will use the information provided to decide whether the school or centre should be closed.

A similar procedure should be followed if an emergency occurs that may require that the school or centre cannot be opened the following day or week.

### **3.2 Where a school or centre closure is likely to occur during office hours.**

- (i) Contact should be made with the relevant Quality Improvement Manager to brief them of the potential need to close the setting, school or centre. They will then consider the requirement with the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate and if appropriate give permission to proceed with a closure.
- (ii) In making a request to close a setting, school or centre the Head Teacher or team leader should take account of any other activities likely to be affected such as community group activities, evening classes or out of school care etc. It is the responsibility of the setting, school or centre to ensure that the relevant groups are advised of the situation with regard to closure.
- (iii) The Head Teacher or team leader should prepare and email the Quality Improvement Manager the relevant information for notifying the media, through the Communications Team. This information should include the name of the setting, school or centre that is closing, whether it is a partial or whole school closure and the reason why the school or centre is closing. Information will also be required on how long the closure will be and how the media, parents, carers and pupils will be informed when the setting, school or centre will be reopening. Once approval has been granted to close a school or centre, the Quality Improvement Manager will notify the Communications Team to ask them to inform the media and upload messaging to the Council's communications channels, such as Twitter, Facebook, intranet, the council's public information screens and public website.
- (iv) Notices should be posted at entrances to the setting, school or centre with details of the reason for the closure, the likely duration of the closure, details of the Council's website and contact numbers for further information.
- (v) Any media enquiries should be forwarded immediately to the Communications Team.

### **3.3 Where the decision to close a school or centre needs to be taken outwith office hours.**

**B-1** Where only a single establishment is affected by the closure, for example due to a lack of heating:

- (i) Contact should be made with the appropriate Quality Improvement Manager to brief him/her of the potential need to close the school or centre. Where relevant, the member of the Directorate team will consider the requirement to give permission to proceed with a closure.
- (ii) Contact with members of the Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate can be made on a 24 hour basis using the contact numbers attached.
- (iii) In making a request to close a setting, school or centre, the Head Teacher or team leader should take account of any other activities likely to be affected such as community group activities, evening classes or out of school care etc. It is the responsibility of the school or centre to ensure that the relevant groups are advised of the situation with regard to closure.
- (iv) The Head Teacher or team leader should prepare the relevant information for notifying the media, through the Communications Team, using the number below. This should include the name of the setting, school or centre that is closing, whether it is a partial or whole school closure and the reason why the setting, school or centre

is closing. Information will also be required on how long the closure will be. The Communications Team is responsible for all media relations and will upload messaging to the Council's communications channels, such as Twitter feed, Facebook, intranet, the Council's public information screens and public website. Settings, schools/centres should upload information onto the school website also, and via Twitter if appropriate. SEEMiS text messaging and Groupcall can also be used to keep parents and carers informed.

- (v) Once approval has been granted to close a setting, school or centre, the relevant member of the Children, Young People and Partnerships team will liaise with the Communications Team to ensure that the media have information on the school or centre closure.
- (vi) Notices should be posted at entrances to the school or centre with details of the reason for the closure, the likely duration of the closure, details of the Council's website and contact numbers for further information. A template for the notice is attached as Appendix 3.
- (vii) Any media enquiries should be forwarded to the Communications Team on 07798924206 and [communications@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:communications@midlothian.gov.uk).

**B-2** Where a number, or all schools and centres in Midlothian have to close due to severe weather conditions or another emergency, depending on the severity of the weather conditions either:

- (i) Head Teachers and team leaders should contact their Quality Improvement Manager to advise that there is an emerging need to close the school or centre. This should be done as early as possible.
- or**
- (ii) A member of the People and Partnerships Directorate team will take a decision as to whether a group of schools and centres are to close or whether all Midlothian schools and or centres will be closed. This will be based on the available information on the weather and road conditions and risk assessments.
- (iii) The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships or their representative will alert the Communications Team. They will make this information available through all channels available – this includes Twitter, Facebook, intranet, the council's public information screens and public website.
- (iv) If possible, settings, schools and centres should update their own website, Twitter, use SEEMiS texting/ Groupcall and post appropriate notices at the school or centre. Schools and centres must keep the Communications Team up to date with any such information to ensure that information is co-ordinated and consistent.
- (v) Updates will be issued by the Communications Team using all available communications channels. This information will include the re-opening times of schools and centres as appropriate.

### 3.4 C) Where a decision has been taken not to open the school on the next school day, the following arrangements should apply:

- Communication should be sent by the school using the normal school communication with parents process.
- Parents should be asked to check the Midlothian Council website or listen to local media, including the BBC, Radio Forth, Real Radio or Black Diamond FM. The Communications Team will provide information to the media.

### 3.5 Informing Parents

Early Learning and Childcare and Primary school pupils should not be dismissed without schools knowing their parents/carers have received the message that they are leaving school early. If a pupil normally travels home alone then, in the event of an early closure they can travel home if it is safe to do so and if the school can confirm the parent/ carer has received the early closure notification. If a pupil is normally accompanied home by a parent/carer/designated adult or older sibling then, in the event of an early closure, they should be accompanied by a parent/carer/designated adult or older sibling. If a parent/carer informs the school that a different-from-normal responsible adult (over age 16) or an older sibling will be taking the pupil home, this should be noted down by the school and a copy held in case of any enquiries about the agreed arrangements for travel.

Parents/carers should be encouraged to keep their emergency contact details current. In the event that contact cannot be made, the Head Teacher should make whatever practical arrangements are possible for the care of the child. This may mean keeping the pupil in the school until the end of the normal school day, if it is safe to do so. Head Teachers must be satisfied that, in relation to secondary school pupils, they are responsible enough to look after themselves should the school close before the normal closing time. Head Teachers should use their knowledge of special circumstances pertaining to individual children in deciding whether parental contact is necessary.

### 3.6 School Transport

Where pupils are transported to and from school, the arrangements become critical in severe weather conditions. Schools should have clear written procedures for dealing with such a situation.

Head Teachers should keep in close contact with transport operators when severe weather conditions prevail. The Transport Operators' contract states that: "*When roads or routes to school are affected by adverse weather conditions, the driver must communicate as early as possible...with the Head Teacher.*" It also states that: "*Notwithstanding any statement by the Head Teacher that children should be transported to school, ...**the final decision as to whether it is safe to operate, ... will rest with the driver of the vehicle.***" And finally that: "*The driver must keep both the school and Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate advised of any decision.*"

To facilitate this contact, all schools should have an up to date note of the relevant transport operators' telephone numbers. The School Transport Officer will provide contact numbers to schools and centres on an annual basis. Operators also have their schools' numbers and the Out of Hours Handling Service number. It may be beneficial to supply a transport operator with a mobile number or other form of emergency contact number for the Head Teacher. This could be used if there were a problem with the telephone system, or when the Head Teacher has difficulty reaching the school.

Once contact has been made with a transport operator and a decision reached, the Head Teacher should give priority to informing the parents and or emergency contacts of the arrangements.

### **3.7 Arrangements within a setting, schools and centre**

**Settings, schools and centres** should have written procedures for dealing with emergencies caused by severe weather or other emergency situation eg loss of heating, water supply or power, or illness-related issues such as staffing or self-isolation. Relevant parts of these procedures should be available to parents in the School Handbook. The school's written procedures should include:

- emergency contact details for the school and the Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate;
- information about how parents and carers will be contacted;
- arrangements for transported pupils;
- arrangements for liaison with catering staff;
- procedures for settings, schools and centres closures, including provision for the care of pupils who cannot be sent home;
- arrangements for coping with a reduced staffing complement;
- It is expected that in most school closures, pupils will have access to meaningful remote learning and families will know in advance how to access this. It is good practice for schools to have remote learning activities ready in preparation for any unexpected school closures.

### **3.8 Arrangements for school and centre staff**

Information for Council staff will normally be provided by the Chief Executive in the event of staff being sent home early due to severe weather conditions. For staff in schools, the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships or one of the Chief Officers will communicate this information. Settings, school and centre closures should be used by staff in the same way as in-service or training days, unless the normal place of work is unsuitable for use when temporary or alternative accommodation may be used. The continued presence of staff will also be required for the supervision of certain pupils, and the delivery of Council services. In all procedures relating to severe weather conditions, the main concern is the safety of employees, service users, students, pupils and members of the public. As a general rule, where some schools are open staff unable to reach their normal place of work should report to the nearest available Midlothian same-sector school or learning centre. Staff should always maintain contact with their Head Teacher, team leader or immediate line manager.

#### **If all Midlothian schools are open**

Children, Young People and Partnerships staff should make every reasonable effort to attend work as normal, taking account of personal safety when making travel arrangements. This may mean staff adjusting their usual travel arrangements e.g. public transport may need to be taken rather than their own cars or more time may need to be allowed for journeys. If staff are unable to get to their place of work due to adverse weather conditions, they should contact their line manager/place of work as soon as is practicable. Line managers will then advise staff on procedures to follow. Staff may be advised to travel to the nearest same-sector Midlothian school to undertake agreed tasks. For security reasons it is essential that all staff wear their identity badges.

### **If only some Midlothian schools are open**

Where a member of staff learns that their school is closed but that other Midlothian Schools are open, they should make every effort to report to the nearest same-sector school where a school manager will allocate appropriate duties. The member of staff should contact their line manager as soon as is practicable. Should staff not be able to contact their Line Manager or Head Teacher they should call their Quality Improvement Manager (details in next section).

### **Prior notice of closure**

Where the intended closure to pupils of a school is known before the end of the working day, the Head Teacher will inform staff of the arrangements for the next working day. Risk assessments will be carried out in advance of a decision for staff to attend their normal place of work to carry out agreed duties e.g. planning, curriculum development, assessment, reporting. Normal health and safety working conditions, e.g. temperature, availability of hot water, must be met.

Where a decision is taken to close schools to pupils and staff, the Head Teacher will advise staff of how contact will be made to update them on future arrangements. Staff will carry out agreed tasks at home, where appropriate. In this situation staff will be paid for their normal working hours that day.

### **Emergency Closures**

If extreme weather conditions develop during the working day, the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships, in consultation with the Head Teacher, may decide that all staff should be sent home. In this case staff, including supply staff, will be paid for their normal working hours for that day.

In the exceptional situation where a member of staff arrives at his/her normal place of work to find it closed and no one is there at all, the member of staff should first try to contact their line manager and if that is not possible contact their Quality Improvement Manager (details in next section).

### **Working from home**

Where there is a business need and an employee can work at their home location a manager may approve home working during a period of adverse weather conditions. Managers should be reminded that home working should be the exception for staff and is not generally a right of school staff.

Within their 35 hour week, teachers spend a maximum of 22.5 hours in class contact. The remaining hours of work beyond class contact are agreed collegiately and are used for a range of tasks (including preparation and marking) which do not require to be carried out within a school. Some of the preparation and assessment work undertaken by teachers is already undertaken at home. In relation to teachers and other school staff, where it is appropriate, working at home may be considered when there are extreme weather conditions and it is established that travel to and from work is not safely possible. This will require to be authorised by the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships prior to a line manager approving temporary home working arrangements as the teaching staff working pattern is set out as an academic session. When the Director has granted prior authorisation, Head Teachers will then agree with individual members of staff on remote learning, administrative, CLPL and curriculum development activities that will be completed either at a home or at an alternative location.

### **3.9 Arrangements for children entitled to Free School Meals**

Where a closure lasts more than one day, parents/carers of pupils entitled to free school meals will receive a BACS payment. Where possible, schools should provide packed lunches if children are leaving early and before lunch.

### **3.10 Young people in attendance at shared placements or college**

Schools are responsible for alerting all parents/carers of a school closure. Schools should add to their closure procedure/checklist a note to contact all shared placement establishments (including blended ELC placements) that the school is closing and what the arrangements are for pupils in those shared placement establishments. Special care will need to be taken for pupils with additional support needs.

## **4.0 THE ROLE OF PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIPS**

- The Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate will inform schools and centres of Severe Weather Warnings as appropriate.
- The Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate will deal promptly with any School or Centre Closure Request and inform the Head Teacher or team leader of their decision. Similar prompt attention will be given to any concerns expressed by Head Teachers or team leaders about staff safety.
- The Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate will liaise with the Place Directorate staff to facilitate communication with transport operators or any other agencies whose involvement is likely to be of assistance.
- In accordance with Midlothian Council emergency procedures, the Council will provide or arrange provision of whatever other assistance is required in the event of a Serious Emergency or Major Incident involving a school or centre.

**Fiona Robertson**

**Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships**

**Contact Person:** For advice on the application of this policy please contact the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships on 0131 271 3719, or e-mail: [education.services@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:education.services@midlothian.gov.uk)



### EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS:

The information contained in this part of the Policy Guideline is not available for publication in the public domain as it contains commercially sensitive information or contains the personal details of members of staff or service users.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Mobile</b>
Fiona Robertson	Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships		07785707845
Michelle Strong	Education Chief Operating Officer		07799540492
Joan Tranent	Chief Officer Children's Services		07825904823
Julie Fox	Quality Improvement Manager Beeslack, Dalkeith, Penicuik & St David's Localities	0131 271 3725	07772 623983
Anna Walton	Quality Improvement Manager Saltersgate and ASN provisions	0131 271 3726	07791575854
Colin McLean	Quality Improvement Manager Lasswade & Newbattle Localities	0131 271 3701	07866036772
Wayne Clark	Transport Operations and Asset Manager		07798504591
Lynn Cochrane	Communications Team		07798924206

# HEALTH AND SAFETY CRITERIA FOR TAKING THE DECISION TO CLOSE A SCHOOL DUE TO SEVERE OR HAZARDOUS WEATHER

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The following risk assessment methodology has been devised to facilitate the decision to close a school due to severe or hazardous weather.

It should be used in conjunction with other relevant assessments designed to assist school management in coming to a decision.

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS

- (a) **Severe weather** refers to any dangerous meteorological phenomena with the potential to cause damage, serious social disruption or loss of human life. It includes the effects of excessive rainfall (with the potential for flooding), high winds, snow and ice.
- (b) **Risk assessment** is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, so that it becomes possible to weigh up whether enough precautions have been taken or whether more to prevent harm should be done.

## 3.0 RISK ASSESSMENT LIMITATIONS

Weather patterns can be difficult to predict and despite detailed forecasts available from the Met Office and other media it is still possible for rapid changes in weather to adversely impact on safety over relatively short periods of time.

Consequently decisions made the previous evening based on the undernoted criterion should be made as late as possible (it is not feasible to recommend a cut-off point given the variety of severe weather types etc).

Should the weather deteriorate significantly during the school day, this may also initiate a decision to close. The assessment template (see annex 1) should be used to assist this process, however consideration needs to be given to the relative safety of staff and pupils. It may for instance, be safer to hold pupils and staff in school in order to ensure that suitable provisions have been made for safe transportation. There are other potential issues relating to ensuring that pupils are returning to an occupied and safe home environment.

## 4.0 THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The safety of pupils and staff must be the prime consideration. A vital prerequisite must be the availability of accurate contact details for every pupil. In the event that closure becomes necessary, it is essential that every pupil is able to get to a place of safety.

The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships may choose to close one or more schools at any stage based on weather conditions and taking into account the risk to pupils and staff.

Otherwise, for instance, during a school day, the Head Teacher may recommend to the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships that a school should be closed. Annex 1 is designed to assist the Head Teacher in providing the Executive Director with the appropriate information to make the final decision on closure. The options for the Head Teacher may include:

- Closing the whole or part of the school building
- All or some pupils being sent home (it may be recognised that some pupils may be safer in school until travel arrangements can be confirmed.
- All or some staff being sent home.

## **5.0 METHODOLOGY**

The risk assessment process, following HSE guidelines, is designed to:

- Assist senior school management in arriving at a decision in advance of a weather emergency whether to open a school
- Provide school management with a dynamic tool to help them make the decision during the school day about when a school should be closed.

It enables school management to identify hazards associated with specific severe weather conditions, who is affected by these hazards, the size or extent of the hazard, the control measures in place and whether these are sufficient to control risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

The undernoted assessment form has been designed to prompt school management to make decisions about school closure in the event of severe and/or hazardous weather.

In coming to a decision consideration must be given to the severity of current and forecast weather, arrangements being in place to enable staff and pupils to make their way home safely, the facilities and condition of the school building and the number of individuals involved (including those with additional support needs.)

# SEVERE WEATHER RISK ASSESSMENT

Appendix 1

WEATHER TYPE - SNOW			
CATEGORY	DEFINITION	HAZARDS	RECOMMENDED ACTION TO CONTROL RISK
<b>VERY LOW</b>	Small quantity of snow lying on roads/pavements. Traffic may move slower than normal	Some slippery external surfaces  Snow being transported into internal areas on footwear etc	Advice to pupils and staff to take extra care when walking, driving or cycling in affected areas. Programme of pathway clearing Effective door mats at all entrances Ongoing housekeeping, clearing of surface water/slush etc
<b>LOW</b>	More widespread snow but road network generally open. Possible localised traffic disruption usually confined to 'prone' areas. Journeys through affected areas may take longer.	Some slippery external surfaces  Snow being transported into internal areas on footwear etc  Snow blocking fire exits and general access/egress to/from school building  Water ingress (eg melting snow)	Internal temperature allows reasonable comfort Facilities for drying/changing wet clothes Vigilant floor mopping/ cleaning Door mats at entrances Regular inspection and remedial actions taken to ensure exits remain unblocked.  Regular inspection/remedial measures to remove slip hazard.  Ingress of water in contact with essential supplies (e.g. electrical components)
<b>MEDIUM</b>	Widespread snow with a number of road closures, others passable only with care  No prospect of temperature rise during school day  Further snowfalls forecast during the day.	Transport to and from school difficult  Icy conditions on pathways around school, slip hazard Perpetual blockage of school pathways and fire exits  Traffic visibility deterioration.	Regular inspection and maintenance of clear pathways and traffic routes.  Routine inspections of areas within school building to ensure that ingress of snow/slush is controlled.  No serious leaks through building structure.  All essential services remain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heat</li> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• Fire alarm system</li> <li>• Electrical equipment – hoists, automatic access doors</li> <li>• Drinking and toilet water remain available</li> <li>• Facilities to prepare and heat food</li> </ul>

<b>WEATHER TYPE - SNOW</b>			
<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>HAZARDS</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION TO CONTROL RISK</b>
<b>HIGH</b>	<p>Widespread deep snow with many roads closed or impassable.</p> <p>Roads likely to become impassable with high risk of stranding.</p> <p>Significant disruption to road, rail and air transport.</p> <p>Risk to personal safety.</p> <p>Severe disruption to day-to-day life as a result.</p> <p>Formal advice from authorities about avoiding unnecessary journeys.</p> <p>Constant freezing temperatures</p>	<p>Traffic chaos in and around the school.</p> <p>Pupil transport cancelled.</p> <p>Insufficient staff to maintain teacher: pupil ratio.</p> <p>Inadequate heating.</p> <p>Inadequate lighting.</p> <p>Failure of essential electrical systems incl Scottish Power, and other utilities.</p> <p>Potential for freezing/burst pipes</p> <p>Slips, falls outwith school building</p> <p>Roof collapse due or other structural damage due to weight of snow</p>	<p>Regular snow clearing activities which enable routes to/from and within school grounds to be maintained in a safe condition.</p> <p>Sufficient staff within school to maintain acceptable ratios.</p> <p>All facilities within the school operating so that there is adequate heating and lighting to maintain comfortable working environment.</p> <p>All safety critical equipment – automatic access/egress doors, lifting equipment, emergency lighting, facilities for preparing and heating food and drinks.</p>

<b>WEATHER TYPE - RAIN</b>			
<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>HAZARDS</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION TO CONTROL RISK</b>
<b>LOW</b>	<p>Localised flooding of low lying fields, recreational land and car parks.</p> <p>Wet road surfaces and possible ponding water, especially in known trouble spots.</p>	<p>Transport delays</p> <p>Slipping risk at entrances to school building</p> <p>Roof leaks – particularly contact with electrical supply</p>	<p>Expecting delays in transport</p> <p>Effective matting at entrances and vigilant mopping protocols</p> <p>Local management, maintenance report, temporary measures (e.g. receptacles, mopping regime)</p>
<b>MEDIUM</b>	<p>Some flooding of homes in the locale, business and transport links affected.</p> <p>Likely disruption to travel.</p> <p>Possible disruption to utilities and phones.</p> <p>Possible isolated evacuation of homes necessary.</p>	<p>Likely ingress of water within building from door openings</p> <p>Overflowing drainage causing possible pollution, increasing infection risk.</p> <p>Water ingress through ceiling/walls</p> <p>Interruptions to utilities</p>	<p>Constant reference to weather forecast</p> <p>Local arrangements for dealing with leakages, floor pooling</p> <p>Ensure that drainage overflow doesn't impact on staff/pupils etc</p>
<b>HIGH</b>	<p>Widespread flooding of property.</p> <p>Severe disruption to travel.</p> <p>Loss of gas, electricity, water supplies.</p> <p>Significant disruption to local community.</p> <p>Evacuation possible.</p> <p>Significant risk to life</p>	<p>Water ingress excessive and beyond mopping.</p> <p>Inaccessible around school area due to severe flooding.</p> <p>Local waterways burst.</p> <p>Widespread drainage overspill</p> <p>Essential utilities at risk of failure</p> <p>Authorities advise essential travel only</p>	<p>Flood protection facilities suitable and sufficient</p> <p>Back up power supplies to enable adequate heating, lighting and facilities for preparing and heating food.</p>

<b>WEATHER TYPE – SEVERE GALES</b>			
<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>HAZARDS</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION TO CONTROL RISK</b>
<b>LOW</b>	<p>Some branches or trees brought down.</p> <p>Localised travel disruption.</p> <p>Localised problems for high sided vehicles on prone routes.</p>	<p>Possible further tree/branch falls though determined by extent of forestation in the vicinity and to/from school</p> <p>Delays in transport</p> <p>Road accidents involving high sided vehicles, particularly as regards walking pupils/staff</p>	<p>Securing loose items in advance</p> <p>Ensuring windows/doors are secured</p>
<b>MEDIUM</b>	<p>More widespread tree damage &amp; other debris, slates etc dislodged from roofs.</p> <p>Possible minor building damage e.g slates dislodged from roofs</p> <p>Some minor structural damage to school building possible</p>	<p>Pathways obstructed, access difficulties</p> <p>Risk of injury from falling items</p>	<p>Remain within school building as much as possible.</p>
<b>SEVERE</b>	<p>Widespread structural damage e.g. roofs blown off, mobile homes overturned, power lines brought down.</p> <p>Potentially widespread and/or prolonged interruptions to power.</p> <p>Expected widespread transport disruption due to e.g. roads blocked by fallen trees.</p> <p>Authorities recommend only essential travel</p>	<p>Staff/pupils injured by falling/flying debris</p> <p>Disruption to safety critical facilities</p> <p>Hazardous journeys to and from school</p> <p>Pollution risk, drainage over spill</p> <p>Loss of utilities and communication links</p>	

## APPENDIX 2. SEVERE WEATHER HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

The Council's Severe Weather Health and Safety Risk Assessment process consists of two levels

Level 1 contains a 'preliminary assessment' and reflects the need to have essential facilities and services available during extreme weather to assure everyone's safety. While a positive answer to any one of the questions below alone, may not lead you to recommend closure of a school, you should consider the severity of weather conditions, the 'criticality' of the service failure and weather forecast and ensure that you have assessed the risk.

As part of the process, each factor directs you towards an assessment of risk, using the matrix over page.

Level 2 of the assessment process involves a more in depth assessment and should be used to monitor conditions within the school should it be decided to keep it open. This will enable you to assess conditions on an ongoing basis during the day

### Level 1 Assessment

The 8 questions in this table cover the main factors which need to be considered when deciding whether your school should open or close.

Each question requires an initial 'yes' or 'no' response. Please refer to the 'Health and Safety Criteria for taking the decision to close a school due to severe or hazardous weather' (Appendix 4) to inform your assessment of risk level (i.e. high, medium or low). The end column allows you to state what control measures may be required to control risk and what, if any further action may be required. This may also determine whether the school should be opened.

Subject	Yes/No	Assessment score and H/M/L	Comment/further action required
<b>(a) Some of this can be evaluated prior to arriving at school</b>			
Are there likely to be any access problems (pathways) within the school grounds?		/	
Are any Fire Exits likely to be blocked at any time?		/	
Is there likely to be a build up of snow/icicles, especially from roof/over-hanging eaves?		/	
Will transport to and from the school be a problem?		/	
Does the short range weather forecast indicate that extreme weather will continue or become worse		/	
Will there be insufficient numbers of staff in school?		/	
<b>(b) Having arrived at school</b>			
Are toilet facilities unavailable?		/	
Are FM unavailable?		/	
Are there heating problems?		/	



The following risk matrix will help you determine the level of residual risk for each factor.

<b>LIKELIHOOD</b>	<b>VERY LIKELY (5)</b>	5	10	15	20	25
	<b>LIKELY (4)</b>	4	8	12	16	20
	<b>FEASIBLE (3)</b>	3	6	9	12	15
	<b>SLIGHT (2)</b>	2	4	6	8	10
	<b>VERY UNLIKELY (1)</b>	1	2	3	4	5
		<b>INSIGNIF (1)</b>	<b>MINOR (2)</b>	<b>SIGNIFICANT (3)</b>	<b>MAJOR (4)</b>	<b>CRITICAL (5)</b>
<b>IMPACT</b>						

**Key:**  
 Green – low risk  
 Amber 9 – medium risk  
 Amber 10-12 – high risk  
 Red – high risk

When you have completed your assessment, you need to sign and date below:

Signed.....

Date.....

# CLOSURE NOTICE

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**Date:**

**School/centre name:**

**We are currently closed because of:**

**We are likely to be closed until:**

**For more information about this closure, please look at our website or follow our social media.**

**[www.midlothian.gov.uk](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk)**

**Fiona Robertson**

***Executive Director, Children, Young People, and Partnerships***