



Scoil Mhuire, Maigh Cuilinn Co. na Gaillimhe

Protocol governing school closure due to unforeseen circumstances

The decision to close the school rests with the Board of Management. Any decision to close is taken in the interest of children's safety and well-being, having assessed the local conditions and risks.

The following guidelines are intended to assist in reaching a decision to close the school at short notice due to severe weather conditions, loss of power or heat or other unforeseen circumstances.

1. When adverse weather conditions occur, the Principal will check conditions in the early morning (from 7am) and consult with the Chairperson of the BOM, the Caretaker, some Teachers and others (incl An Garda Síochána if necessary) to establish what conditions are like in different locations, particularly in the vicinity of the school. The Department of Education & Skills recommends that schools should consider not opening where Met Éireann issues a "Status Red" weather warning related to wind in the area, to coincide with the periods during which students and staff would be expected to be travelling to and from school.
2. Factors to be taken into account include:
 - Conditions in the school itself;
 - The capacity of the school to ensure the health and safety of pupils whilst in the school;
 - The ability of parents, staff and school transport services to safely negotiate local road conditions to reach the school.
3. Where possible, contact should be made with other local schools to try and co-ordinate the decision to close.
4. If a decision is made between the Principal and Chairperson to close the school, this will be conveyed to parents and staff via Webtext before 8am. Arrangements are in place for a number of people to access the Webtext facility off-site to send this message. Each September, a check should be undertaken by the School Secretary to ensure that mobile telephone numbers for all parents (particularly parents of newly-enrolled Junior Infants) are uploaded onto the Webtext service.
5. Where the school is forced to close for up to two days in any school year, this will be treated as *force majeure* and the time lost will not have to be made up. However, if we have to close the school unexpectedly for any more than two days in a school year, this excess time lost will have to be worked up later but before the end of the current school year. This may involve reducing planned holiday time/breaks or extending the end of the school year.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in January 2013 and reviewed in November 2015. Further reviews will be undertaken as required.

Signed:

Joe Howley
**Chairperson,
Board of Management**

Terry Kavanagh
Principal