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Wallace Hall Academy, Primary and ELC
"Together we grow, learn and achieve"

Head Teacher: Barry Graham

3rd December 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

Emergency Closures

As winter progresses there is always the possibility of the school having to close at any time because of an emergency, such as severe weather, no water, electricity or heating. If this is the case it may not be possible to notify you in advance.

When the school is 'closed' due to inclement weather, this is only the case for pupils who have to travel either by public transport or by car i.e. for those pupils who do not live in Thornhill. The school remains open for staff except those who are travelling to remote areas or in the direction of the inclement weather, if it is severe. We must always take into account the safety of our pupils and our staff and, on occasion, it may be necessary to shut the school to everyone.

It is of the utmost importance, for the safety of the children, that everyone is fully aware of the procedures. The safe and speedy dismissal of pupils in the event of an emergency closure depends on the school and parents working in partnership.

What should parents do?
In the first instance, you are best placed to make an appropriate decision on behalf of your own child when weather conditions are severe.

It is essential that, when there is potential for school closures due to severe weather conditions, we are in a position to communicate quickly and clearly with parents. This is just as important in relation to when we are open as it is when we are closed.

1. You have recently completed your Family Update Form where you will have checked or updated Emergency Contacts. If you would like to add any other emergency contacts to your child's profile with emergency school closure in mind, please make sure that we have the **name, address, email address and telephone number** for them.

2. Make sure that your child knows the names of your emergency contacts. If you have concerns about your child travelling between home and school, you should 'play safe' and keep them at home, informing the school that you are doing so.

3. Please help us by not posting messages about a school closure on social media. We will do that on the school's Facebook and Twitter pages. We will also be communicating with parents by Groupcall. It is important to remember that it is unlikely that each situation will be identical so the information may come out in a different order to what you are used to.

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4. Please do not react to phone calls from your child, they do not always have the correct information.

5. If you need to collect your child please call the office beforehand. It creates additional pressure on our school office when parents turn up unannounced and can interfere with the procedures that are in place.

6. If you are unable to collect your child yourself, please telephone your emergency contact and ask him/her to collect your child. The school telephone lines must be kept open to allow us to make outgoing calls, to contact bus and taxi firms and the homes of children who live a distance away.

7. Parents should make it clear to older children whether or not they may escort younger brothers/sisters to their destination and inform the school accordingly.

8. In the event of a full school closure, pupils who walk home will be released first. Pupils travelling by bus will go after that.

What will the school do?

1. Any sudden closure will be notified by Groupcall message and posted on the Council website, our school website and our school social media accounts.

2. We will continue to Groupcall parents each time a bus leaves the school. Please check your phone regularly and do not phone the school to check when your child's bus is likely to leave. This causes more work for our staff and slows up the process of getting all pupils who need to travel away speedily and safely.

3. In the event of a total closure, where it is customary for children to walk home at the end of the school day, we will release them to walk home only if a parent or an identified adult will be there expecting their arrival. Account will be taken also of the age of the pupil, the severity of weather conditions and the distance to be walked.

4. Provide adequate supervision by members of staff for any pupils who cannot be collected immediately.

Our aim is to improve our communication with parents as we recognise that an unplanned school closure is a stressful situation and we hope to help limit your stress by keeping in regular contact. We would very much appreciate your support in this matter and as always value your feedback.

Yours sincerely

B Graham
Head Teacher