



Woodlane High School

achieving success in a nurturing environment

Emergency Closure

Updated: June 2026

Next Update: June 2027

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Emergency School Closure Procedure

It is advisable that the Headteacher and relevant staff keep this document accessible at all times.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the school remains open during term time. However, there may be circumstances where this is not possible. The Headteacher is responsible for determining whether the school should close, either in full or in part, taking into account the health, safety and welfare of pupils, staff and visitors.

Factors involved in reaching the decision to close the school may include:

- Restricted access to the school (e.g. road obstructions, snow, ice or flooding).
- Failure of essential services or significant damage to the school site (e.g. heating, electricity, water supply or storm damage).
- A public health incident or medical emergency (e.g. a pandemic).
- Any other circumstances that prevent the safe operation of the school.

Actions Following a Decision to Close the School

The Headteacher will ensure that staff, parents, carers and pupils are informed as quickly as possible through the school's agreed communication channels, including email, text messaging, the school website and any official school communication apps.

Information regarding closures may also be shared through the Local Authority where appropriate. However, as incidents can occur with little or no warning and communication systems may occasionally be disrupted, the school will maintain additional contact arrangements to support the timely dissemination of information to staff and families where necessary.

Parents and carers are encouraged to ensure that the school always holds up-to-date contact details to enable effective communication in an emergency.

Following a decision to close the school, the following actions should be undertaken as appropriate:

1. Notify the Local Authority and HR of the decision to close.
2. Update the school website and any other communication platforms with details of the closure.
3. Update the school answerphone with a closure message.
4. Inform all staff via the school's agreed communication channels, including the 'All Staff' email group.
5. Inform parents and carers via email and/or text message.

6. Contact directly any families who may have difficulty accessing electronic communications.
7. Contact transport providers to cancel pupil transport where required.
8. Confirm that school meals have been cancelled where appropriate.
9. Inform contractors, agency staff and other relevant service providers of the closure and any changes to site access arrangements.
10. Inform the Chair of Governors of the decision.
11. Consider arrangements for remote education.
12. Provide updates to staff, parents and carers as further information becomes available.

Staff Attendance

The school recognises that severe weather and other emergency situations may make travel difficult or unsafe. Staff are expected to make every reasonable effort to attend work unless alternative arrangements have been authorised by the Headteacher.

Where adverse conditions make travel difficult or potentially unsafe, staff should carefully consider whether their journey can be undertaken safely and notify the Headteacher as soon as possible. The Headteacher will consider the circumstances and determine whether attendance is required or whether alternative working arrangements can be put in place.

If a member of staff is authorised not to attend the school site, they will normally be expected to work remotely where practicable, undertaking duties such as delivering virtual learning, preparing resources, attending online meetings or completing other work appropriate to their role, unless advised otherwise by the Headteacher.

If the school is closed to pupils but remains open for staff, employees will normally be expected to attend work unless otherwise directed by the Headteacher. Where appropriate, staff may be required to support remote education, undertake planning and preparation activities, or assist with operational requirements.

In the event of an emergency closure of the school, staff will normally be expected to continue working remotely where this is reasonably practicable. The Headteacher will provide guidance regarding expectations and priorities during the period of closure.

Any contractors, agency workers or other relevant service providers should be informed promptly of emergency arrangements and any changes to site access requirements.

Remote Education During Emergency Closure

As soon as practically possible, the school will seek to maintain continuity of education through remote learning arrangements, where this is practicable and appropriate to pupils' needs.

The Headteacher will determine the nature and extent of remote education to be provided, taking into account pupils' age, needs and circumstances.

Remote learning may include:

- Online lessons or virtual classroom sessions.
- Learning activities and resources shared electronically.
- Independent learning tasks.
- Communication with pupils and families through approved school platforms.
- Paper-based learning materials where appropriate.

Parents and carers will be provided with information regarding remote learning arrangements and any expectations concerning pupil participation.

The school recognises that circumstances vary between families and will seek to provide reasonable support where barriers to accessing remote learning are identified.

Teachers should ensure that school laptops are accessible.

Staff Remote Working Expectations

Where staff are authorised to work remotely during a school closure, they are expected to remain available during their normal working hours unless alternative arrangements have been agreed with the Headteacher.

Staff working remotely may be required to:

- Deliver or support remote education.
- Prepare and distribute learning resources.
- Maintain communication with pupils, parents, carers and colleagues as appropriate.
- Attend virtual meetings, briefings and training sessions.
- Complete planning, assessment, administrative or other duties relevant to their role.
- Follow the school's policies relating to safeguarding, data protection, confidentiality and the acceptable use of technology.

The Headteacher will provide guidance regarding priorities and expectations during any period of remote working.

Snow and Ice Management

The school is responsible for taking reasonable steps to manage the risks associated with snow and ice on the school site. The Site Manager is responsible for arranging the clearance and treatment of priority areas, including entrances, walkways, access routes and emergency exits.

Where severe weather is forecast, arrangements should be made for salt, grit or other appropriate treatments to be applied in advance, where practicable, to reduce the risk of slips and falls.

During periods of snow and ice, site conditions will be monitored and reviewed, and appropriate measures taken to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and visitors.

Where weather conditions present a risk to health and safety, the Headteacher may restrict access to certain areas of the site, require pupils to remain indoors during break and lunchtime periods, or implement other measures necessary to ensure the safe operation of the school.

Staff, pupils and visitors should take reasonable care when moving around the site during adverse weather conditions and follow any instructions issued by the school.

School Closure Message Template

The following template may be adapted and used when notifying staff, parents and carers of an emergency closure:

'Emergency School Closure

Due to [reason for closure], the school will be closed on [date(s)].

This decision has been taken in the interests of the health, safety and welfare of pupils, staff and visitors.

Parents and carers should not bring pupils to school during this period.

Information regarding remote learning arrangements, where applicable, will be communicated separately.

We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates through the school's usual communication channels.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.'

Key Contact Information

Confidential contact details have been removed from the published version of this document.

See Appendix 1 – Emergency Closure Contact List 2026, which is stored securely within the school's confidential HR records.