



Emergency closure guidance

Introduction

Within the limitations set out by statutory guidance and health and safety legislation and wherever possible, Mabel Prichard School will remain open during the school day to deliver education to its pupils. However, The Gallery Trust's Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Kay Willett, together with the school's Executive Headteacher, Lucy Wawrzyniak, is authorised by The Gallery Trust Board of Trustees to decide to ***declare an emergency closure when exceptional circumstances make it absolutely necessary and in the best interests of the pupils.***

The health and safety of pupils and staff will always be paramount in decision making. Decision making will be based on a full and detailed risk assessment and will include consideration of what options are available, for example, full or partial closure, changing opening and closing times etc.

Emergency closure of the school

The following factors will be considered in deciding to close Mabel Prichard School for exceptional/emergency reasons. These include:

1. Health and Safety Requirements (including adverse weather conditions):
key questions for consideration include:

- Can enough staff attend the school to ensure the safe and efficient running of the school?
- Have local weather forecasts and road conditions, including those for areas from which staff will be travelling, been reviewed to assist in planning for potential staff absence?
- Can pupils and staff access the school building safely?
- Can pupils and staff be evacuated in an emergency?
- In an emergency, can the Emergency Services access the school?
- Is the area designated for disembarkation from transport safe for pupils?

SEE APPENDIX B FOR EXAMPLE RISK ASSESSMENT

2. Pupil/Teacher/Support Staff Ratios: key questions for consideration include:

- If a number of staff cannot attend, is the number of staff available for work acceptable to run the school efficiently and safely given the needs of pupils?
- Does the pupil staff ratio indicate that there could be a partial school closure or a full school closure?

SEE APPENDIX C FOR EXAMPLE RISK ASSESSMENT

3. School closures as the result of a pandemic (for example COVID -19)

- Schools *may* have to close because insufficient appropriately trained and specialist staff are available to ensure the safety of pupils *or* because of a central decision to close all schools in an area. Schools have always had to be ready to respond at short notice to the need for emergency closures for one reason or another. ***The difference is that the frequency, length and significance of these episodes may be greater than previously experienced.***
- Local decisions about whether or not to close schools should be based on the number/suitability of appropriately trained staff available to ensure that the health and safety of pupils is not compromised. Judgements about how many staffs are needed to ensure the safety of particular numbers of pupils will need to be made locally, taking account of the nature of pupils concerned, including their medical, behavioural and pastoral needs, and the number of staff available.

There is no specific Risk Assessment for closure in the event of a COVID – 19 pandemic – the school will follow the DFE/LA Guidance on whether schools should remain open or closed. In the absence of national/LA guidance, the school will apply the Risk Assessment in Appendix C.

Communicating the decision to close the school

The CEO or Executive Headteacher will carry out a risk assessment and the decision to close will be made wherever possible by 7:15 am or at the earliest possible opportunity and communicated to the school's Integrated Transport provider and parents via Parentmail and text. In the event of a whole school closure BBC Radio Oxford, Heart FM and Jack FM will also be informed. The school's website will also be updated with information to parents and where possible when the school is likely to be reopening.

Information about emergency and planned school closures is published on the County Council website <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/schoolclosures>. This is the main source of up to date countywide information about school closures and is a key resource especially in times of widespread closures, for example, as a result of severe weather.

Appendix A Planning Checklist

Checklist - initial response	Completed	Time	SLT Lead
Assess the need for closure. Consider whether any mitigation measures are possible for example partially opening the school to some pupils. You should consider the number of staff available who are required to support with medical, behavioural and pastoral needs.			
If necessary, assemble a School Emergency Management Team (SEMT) to allocate actions.			
Seek support from other organisations (e.g. CEO, Director of Schools or the Local Authority) as appropriate.			
Ensure that everyone who needs to be aware of the closure is notified, using the most suitable options agreed as a school for each of the groups below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parents / carers ● Taxis ● Integrated Transport ● Staff ● The Gallery Trust Executive Representative ● Rapid Improvement Board Representative ● Local radio stations ● Local Authority 			
If the closure takes place during the school day, arrange transport for pupils as necessary.			
If the closure takes place outside school hours, at least one member of staff should be present at the school entrance at the beginning of the school day, to ensure that any pupils who do arrive are informed of the closure, and to check pupils can return home safely.			

Appendix B Risk Assessment – Health and Safety/Severe Weather

Risk Assessment Record 2020 - 2021

What are the patterns that present health and safety hazards?

- Can pupils and staff access the school building safely?
- Will integrated transport provide transport home if the weather conditions worsen during the day?
- Effects of the cold on staff and pupils
- Use of equipment (such as shovels, spreaders etc)
- Slips, trips and falls
- Can pupils and staff be evacuated in an emergency?
- In an emergency, could the Emergency Services access the school?
- Traffic management - Is the area designated for disembarkation from transport safe for pupils?

Who might be harmed and how?

- **Staff, pupils, parents and visitors** – accidents, slips, trips and falls, inadequate supervision if not enough staff available to open the buildings and receive the pupils safely into school
- **Third-party transport providers** – access and egress to the school site might be compromised due to snow/icy conditions increasing the potential for car/mini-bus collisions, accidents, slips, trips and falls for both drivers and passengers

**Estimate
Risk Level
(H/M/L)**

What measures are in place to reduce the risk?

1. Experienced Senior Leadership Team and teaching staff directing staff and students' education and welfare whilst on-site.
2. Members of staff have been advised to wear "sensible" footwear
3. Partial closure of the school to ensure that adequate Staff Pupil ratios are in place
4. Daily routine will be dynamically reviewed by SLT if the need arises, with every effort to continue 'as normal'.
5. Free association to be limited to areas of the site cleared of snow and ice. If this is not possible the decision to accommodate pupils indoors at break times will be taken.
6. Suitable snow clearing shovels provided.

**Estimate
Risk Level
(H/M/L)**

<p>7. Appropriate footpaths around the site, car park cleared of snow and ice, all cleared areas gritted with salt. Areas to be monitored on-going to ensure the likelihood of slips, trips or falls is reduced as far as reasonably practicable.</p> <p>8. All staff have an individual duty of care for their health and safety</p> <p>9. All staff to wear appropriate clothing / PPE if working to clear any remaining ice and snow. Breaks to be taken periodically to reduce strains or muscle fatigue</p>	
<p>What further action is needed to reduce the risk? (State actions) SLT to continue to monitor the weather forecast in case of further snowfall The estates team at secondary and the caretaker at primary to monitor grit levels and top-up as required.</p> <p>Snow / Ice clearance method: A pathway of at least one metre wide will be cleared; this will allow suitable access for pedestrians and pushchairs / wheelchairs. Snow and ice will be completely removed using a snow scraper or shovel, snow and ice should not be brushed, or dissolved using hot water, as this will make surfaces more hazardous. Once the path has been cleared rock salt will be used to assist in providing extra grip. Paths will be regularly checked throughout the day to ensure re-freezing or further snow coverage has not occurred. Additional care is taken when clearing sloping pathways and steps, it may be necessary for safety reasons to consider the temporary closure of some non-essential areas of the school to avoid risks to staff, pupils or visitors. An assessment of the situation will be made by Executive Headteacher, School Business Manager or Head of School</p> <p>Pathways across car parks may be cleared if resources permit. All persons clearing snow will be provided with suitable snow scrapers, shovels, rock salt, wear protective gloves, footwear and clothing (i.e. including high visibility vests), and take regular breaks from the task.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Monitoring Arrangements (e.g. Before each use/occasion, during handover/staff meeting, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually during site inspection etc): Daily review until site is free from snow and ice, annual formal review.</p> <p>Review Date/Frequency Post each closure to assess if this RA is fit for purpose of amendments need to be made.</p>	

Name of Assessor	Job Title	Date of Assessment	Signed	Date

Appendix C Risk Assessment – Pupil Teacher Ratios
Risk Assessment Record 2020 - 2021

What are the patterns that present health and safety hazards?

- If a number of staff cannot attend due to illness is the number of staff available for work acceptable to run the school efficiently and safely given the needs of students?
- Does the pupil staff ratio indicate that there could be a partial school closure or a full school closure?

<p><u>Who</u> might be harmed and <u>how</u>?</p> <p>Pupils and staff</p> <p>Mabel Prichard School is a Special School for students with complex needs. Consideration will be given to the specific needs of pupils and whether or not they can be met safely and appropriately with reduced staffing. High risk behaviours, medical and hygiene needs and associated incidents linked to students will frequently require 2:1 support.</p>	<p>Estimate Risk Level (H/M/L)</p>
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<p>What measures are in place to reduce the risk?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial Closure – school leaders will need to reduce numbers of pupils on site if Staff Pupil Ratio (SPR) is insufficient. School leaders will determine this by assessing if there will be sufficient staff on site to meet the specific needs of the students. This will include staff trained for specific medical needs, first aid trained staff and staff that are TeamTeach trained. The Level of Need Matrix is used to support this process 	<p>Estimate Risk Level (H/M/L)</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School leaders have specific responsibilities in the event of a partial closure including, notification of parents and transport and creating rotas for each site ● Full closure – school leaders will need to consider full school closure if there aren't sufficient staff to ensure safe opening of the school 				
<p>What further action is needed to reduce the risk? (State actions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruit a team of Trust wide Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Pastoral Support Workers which can be deployed across the schools in the Trust ● Address sickness absence with introduction of Wellbeing strategy and use of the Managing Staff Absence Policy 				
<p>Monitoring Arrangements Daily review until staff attendance restored to effective operational levels.</p> <p>Review Date/Frequency – post each full/partial closure</p>				
Name of Assessor	Job Title	Date of Assessment	Signed	Date