



Alford Community Campus

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Dear Parent/Carer

School Closure due to Adverse Weather or Emergency

Alford Academy makes every effort to ensure that the education of children is interrupted as little as possible, but accepts that in severe weather conditions, or in other emergencies the safety of pupils and staff is paramount and that partial or complete closure of the school may be necessary. The attached guidelines outline Aberdeenshire Council's procedures and guidance as to your responsibilities in the event of adverse weather or other emergency closure situations.

In the event of adverse weather please check the school closure information on the Aberdeenshire Council website <https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/Apps/schools-closures/> (you can bookmark this page and/or register to receive email alerts re school closures). There is also an adverse weather phone line 0370 054 4999 (Pin number = 021010), however we would recommend that where possible, parents/carers use the website for the most detailed and up to date information.

The Head Teacher, Mrs Wotherspoon, will make a decision based on weather forecasts, advice from Police Scotland and other appropriate agencies and discussions with local transport operators and school staff. Depending on the severity of conditions, there may be a full closure of the school or a partial closure eg school may be open for village pupils only or certain bus routes may not run. The school will try and update the website and phoneline as early as possible – however the situation can change due to developing weather and road conditions.

School Transport

Guidance for Parents from the Public Transport Unit can be found on the Aberdeenshire Website <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/school-transport/adverse-weather/> This includes the following advice:

- Information will normally be posted on the council's school closure web pages and Schools Information Line before 7am in the morning. However, it is not always possible to alert parents of service cancellations or route variations within this timescale, depending upon developing localised weather conditions. As such pupils should wait no longer than 20 minutes at the designated pick-up point, and, if no school transport vehicle arrives, then return home or follow the instructions given by their parent or carer regarding the situation. It is clearly important that parents/carers retain a means of communication with their children should the school transport service not operate, and it must be stressed that the responsibility for the safety and welfare of children prior to boarding the school transport service remains with the parent or carer. (Alford Academy recommends that parents also ensure their children have the means to access their house in the event of a school bus picking up pupils in the morning but being unable to continue with the journey and returning to the pick-up point due to deteriorating road conditions),
- In the event of a journey to school being cancelled by a transport operator on the grounds of adverse weather, the operator will not be responsible for conveying pupils home in the afternoon. In such circumstances, parents of pupils who normally travel on school transport are asked not to bring their children to school themselves. Should parents ignore this advice and, at their own risk, choose to bring their children to school the parents then become responsible for conveying their children home again at

the end of the school day, or earlier, if it becomes necessary to send all pupils home and close the school due to worsening weather conditions.

Advance Call Requests

Because of the large number of pupils in Secondary Schools, in the event of an emergency closure part way through the school day, pupils are normally dismissed to walk home or to school transport without contacting parents individually. The exception is where parents have made a specific request for an advance call. If you feel that your child would be put at risk if he/she was sent home without your prior knowledge, **please contact Mrs Gill in the school office by Tuesday 30 November** to notify your requirement for an essential advance call. Please note that **this request must be renewed each year**, even if you have requested this service in the past.

Similarly, **parents who normally transport their children to school** should ensure that they have provided the school up to date contact information. **Please contact Mrs Gill with details by Tuesday 30 November**

Additional Information for Parents

- Pupils must wear appropriate outdoor clothing throughout the winter months.
- It is the Parent/Carer's decision if it is safe for their child to travel to school in adverse weather conditions, whether by school transport or by foot. If the school is open and you do not feel it is safe for your child to travel to school please contact the school office prior to 8.40 a.m. Similarly, if you are concerned about deteriorating weather during the day, and you wish to pick your child up from school, you must inform the school office that you are removing your child from school.
- Parents are responsible for their children's safety to and from the bus pickup/drop off point.
- Pupils are only eligible to travel on a bus for which they have a pass and should always carry their pass when travelling on school transport. Lost passes should be reported to the school office asap. Pupils cannot go home with friends on school transport unless they have a pass for that contract.

Continuity of Learning

In the event of a school closure due to adverse weather, there is an expectation that pupils continue with their studies as directed by class teachers. Teachers may give out materials in class or post work on google classrooms for pupils to refer to in the event of a snow closure. In the event of school closures or disruption to transport, we would urge all parents to encourage their children to access these materials and to undertake home learning tasks, including those set by teachers. Any formal assessments which are missed due to adverse weather will be re-scheduled.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Miss C McIver
Cluster Business Manager